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DUNGEON™

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CONTENTS

4 RESCUE AT RIVENROAR
By David Noonan
A Scales of War Adventure Path adventure. The new *Dungeon* Adventure Path kicks off in the town of Brindol. The PCs must locate and rescue some missing townsfolk and find out why a new hobgoblin chieftain is so interested in this region. An adventure for 1st-level PCs.

46 THE HAUNTING OF KINCEP MANSION
By Skip Williams
Long rumored to be haunted by eerie specters, Kincep Mansion has stood for years, mostly untouched by nearby townsfolk. Now something is preying on the local villagers—something that comes from the house. An adventure for 12th-level PCs.

70 THE LAST BREATHS OF ASHENPORT
By Ari Marmell
Newly updated for 4th Edition! The seaside town of Ashenport has a troubled past and a dark secret. If you spend a night in Ashenport, you just might not wake up the next morning. An adventure for 8th-level PCs.

106 FORGOTTEN REALMS® THUNDERSPIRE CONVERSION
By Greg Bilsland
If you're interested in converting Thunderspire Labyrinth to your Realms campaign, look no further than this detailed advice and alternate encounters for H2.

112 ECHOES OF THUNDERSPIRE LABYRINTH
By Greg Bilsland
Want more *H2* fun? Check out this Side Trek that expands on the action from *Thunderspire Labyrinth*.

ON THE COVER
Illustration by Wayne Reynolds

3 EDITORIAL

122 DUNGEONCRAFT
By James Wyatt

126 SAVE MY GAME
By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

129 MAP OF MYSTERY
By Christopher West

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156

DUNGEON July 2008

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Pitch In!

This is a momentous month for *Dungeon*. We're launching Scales of War, our new Adventure Path. This one is big. Not only will this Adventure Path take you from 1st level all the way to 30th, but we're pulling out some big guns. As always, if you're planning to run the AP, make sure your players stay away from the pdfs so they don't get any insider information!

The main thing I wanted to cover in this space is how we're looking at pitches for new adventures now that 4th Edition has launched. We're revamping the writer's guidelines for both *Dungeon* and *Dragon* magazines, and we'll be posting them in the very near future.

In the mean time, I wanted to give some general guidelines on submitting adventure pitches to us. We still want a pitch first. Send pitches to submissions@wizards.com, with an eye toward the types of adventures we're running, but here are a few tips to winning us over:

Before you send in a pitch, think about your villain, your location, and your villain's agenda. These three elements really form the cornerstone of good adventure design.

You want your villain to be compelling. That often means he's a hateful SOB that the PCs just can't wait to nail to a wall. But sometimes it means he's a surprise. Sometimes he's a former ally. Sometimes he's a misguided fool. There are lots of viable options, but give your villain something fun and unique—a compelling personality, a stylish mannerism, a unique ability or signature item. Give him (or her) something that sets him apart from the crowd.

Then think about where he lives. Make sure the location has something to offer. "Sleeper in the Tomb of Dreams" (issue #155) took us to a dungeon filled with crazy traps and blind, obsessed cultists. But you don't have to go that far out. Try to push the boundaries of the system.

Dungeons that allow for battles across multiple rooms, or that take place in large areas, are not only viable in 4th Edition—they're encouraged. Your dungeon is a living environment, not something static.

Give your villain something to shoot for. If he's just hanging out, minding his business, he's not very exciting. He needs a goal, just like anyone else! There's nothing worse than kicking the door down on a villain's lair to find him sitting on the couch eating Cheetos and slurping on a Big Gulp. Yawn! If he's not up to no good, he's not a villain. This bit might seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how many folks forget to include the menace part of their "menacing villain" in their pitch.

Finally, read the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. There's loads of great info in there, but especially on building integrated encounters (using traps, monsters, and terrain together effectively). You just can't go wrong with a thorough reading of the *DMG* anyway.

So crack those books, fire up the brain cells, and send us a pitch! This magazine won't write itself.

HEROIC
1-10

by David Noonan

Rescue at Rivenroar

illustrations by Jason A. Engle and Steve Prescott ✦ cartography by Mike Schley

The world has never been a safe place. Bastions of civilization populate a dark, menacing world—islands of order and reason exist in a land otherwise overrun by dark cults, vile monsters, creatures from the dark edges of the imagination, and worse. As deadly as the world is on a normal day, something has begun to stir on the fringes of the civilized Elsir Vale. Formerly the site of an attack by an army known as the Red Hand, the Vale has known several years of peace since brave adventurers stormed into the teeth of the approaching Hand and sent them scurrying back into the darkness.

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What's an Adventure Path?

Scales of War is the fourth Adventure Path to appear in the pages of *Dungeon Magazine*. But what, you ask, is an Adventure Path? Quite simply, it is a series of related adventures intended to form a complete D&D campaign that takes your players from 1st level all the way to, in the case of Scales of War, 30th level.

Previous Adventure Paths, presented with the 3rd Edition D&D rules, took characters from 1st to 20th level. But with all three tiers in the new edition ripe and ready to explore, we're pushing the limit with Scales of War. Each tier takes roughly six adventures to traverse, which means we'll finish off this Adventure Path in about eighteen issues. Each adventure advances characters from between one and a half to two levels of experience. We recognize that not everyone will meet every encounter or complete every quest, however, so periodically, we point DMs to a supplemental *Side Trek* or short adventure to keep your PCs on pace.

Plus, roughly every other month, *Dragon* will feature new support content for Scales of War. The first such article appears in *Dragon* #366 in August 2008, and it details possible character backgrounds for your brand-new Scales of War characters.

Finally, this Adventure Path is intended to function as a complete D&D campaign. That means we make some assumptions about the history of the world as we move along, just as you would in any campaign you run. We borrow heavily from the D&D mythology of 4th Edition, as well as all the great ideas that have cropped up in other products over the years—including the pages of past issues of *Dungeon*!

Enjoy your stay in Scales of War, and keep an eye out for next month's installment, "Siege of Bordrin's Watch," by Robert J. Schwalb.

But the peace of Elsir Vale—and specifically, the town of Brindol, heart of the former conflict with the Red Hand—has been shattered. The vague shadow of unease the locals have been experiencing lately has crystallized in the form of an attack on the town itself. Now Brindol finds itself once more in need of brave heroes willing to come to the aid of their citizens.

In "Rescue at Rivenroar," the player characters must brave the depths of ancient catacombs in search of prisoners taken from the town of Brindol in a midnight raid. The hobgoblins, bandits that style themselves after an invading horde from long ago, have taken refuge in a dungeon under a ruined mountain fortress, and the PCs must clear them out to find the captive townsfolk and the treasures taken from Brindol.

"Rescue at Rivenroar" also marks the first step in a great journey—the Scales of War Adventure Path, which spans 30 levels and put the PCs at the crux of events that shapes the world for centuries to come. While the scope of this adventure isn't as grand, it represents the seed from which an epic tale will surely grow. "Rescue at Rivenroar" is an adventure for 1st-level PCs.

Background

Sinruth is a hobgoblin with greater aspirations than a life spent preying on the fringes of civilization. He listened closely at the campfires when his fathers and uncles told tales of the Red Hand of Doom, a mighty army that ran across the land like a scythe. And when he became an adult and a leader of his own band of hobgoblins, he found a cache of tunics and weapons left behind by that army. Sinruth felt his destiny calling. He declared himself the new Warlord of Sinruth's Hand (as he named the group), emblazoned every possible surface with a crudely painted, downward thrusting red hand insignia, and set about recruiting the massive army that he felt was his birthright.

But starting an army isn't as easy as those campfire tales led Sinruth to believe. Years passed with Sinruth's band eking out a meager existence in the wilderness. But slowly, he started to gain allies. A temporary bargain with some sinister, mischievous gnomes blossomed into a lasting friendship. The Red Hand's exploration of the mountains unearthed some undisturbed catacombs beneath the long-ruined Castle Rivenroar. Sinruth struck another bargain, and the undead guardians let the Red Hand move in, in exchange for periodic payment of kidnapped prisoners.

Sinruth and the reconstituted Red Hand had a base and a growing reputation, but they were far from a mighty army. An emissary from another remnant of the Red Hand offered to join forces under Sinruth's banner and more than double Sinruth's fifty soldiers under arms. All Sinruth had to do was attack Brindol, steal some relics from the original Red Hand invasion, and take enough prisoners to keep the undead guardians of Rivenroar satisfied.

The new Red Hand did recently, with Sinruth personally leading the assault on Brindol. The Red Hand sacked Brindol's Hall of Great Valor, stealing back many of the museum pieces on display there. Sinruth brought back seven prisoners, despite the fact that the new Red Hand lost half its number in the attack. So now Sinruth waits in the Rivenroar catacombs for the emissary to return with reinforcements, and he bides

his time by contemplating the stolen treasures of a grander age and dreaming of conquests yet to come.

Meanwhile in Brindol, the dead have been buried and the damage to the town repaired. But seven of the townsfolk are missing—taken by Sinruth and the Red Hand. The town council is willing to pay handsomely for brave adventurers to rescue the prisoners and recover the antique treasures taken from the Hall of Great Valor . . . adventurers like those at your table.

Adventure Synopsis

In "Rescue at Rivenroar," the PCs must rescue seven kidnapped citizens of Brindol. Part of Sinruth's rise to power is due to his evangelizing to his fellow goblinoids and other vile creatures that he will overthrow local bastions of civilization. He reserves special loathing, however, for Brindol, scene of the Red Hand's defeat.

The recent attack has the locals unnerved, and early in the adventure, the PCs witness firsthand that the kidnappings are not an isolated incident. To sow more fear and uncertainty, more of Sinruth's Hand continues raids on the town. After foiling a pair of such attacks, the PCs are approached by Councilmember Troyas, a member of Brindol's ruling town council, to recover the missing citizens.

The PCs travel to Sinruth's lair—a sprawling underground complex called Rivenroar. There they face Sinruth's Hand, free the lost citizens of Brindol, face Sinruth himself . . . and discover some uncomfortable information about the nature of Sinruth in Elsir Vale.

The Prisoners

"Rescue at Rivenroar" includes a puzzle in the form of the seven prisoners the PCs are trying to rescue. The hobgoblins have been moving their captives around the Rivenroar catacombs, so each prisoner knows something about the Rivenroar layout. When the PCs reach their first prisoner, that prisoner gives them clues about where one or two of the other prisoners are. And while none of the prisoners are effective combatants, some have useful knowledge or skills.

Rescuing the prisoners amounts to a major quest, but it's likely the PCs rescue some captives, return them to civilization, then come back for the rest. The PCs don't earn the 500 XP until all the captives return to Brindol or die trying. (One prisoner, Kartenix, has died in captivity.)

Below you'll find brief descriptions of each of the prisoners. Each one knows something—but by no means everything—about the location of the other prisoners. All the prisoners are scared out of their wits to greater or lesser degree. Some have been tormented—though not yet tortured—by their captors. And while the hobgoblins have been moving the prisoners around the Rivenroar catacombs, the prisoners often have bags over their heads. And when you've been dragged, kicking and screaming, down hallway after darkened hallway, they all start to look alike. Any maps that captives draw for PCs are inaccurate and out of proportion. And if you emphasize that these six people have been held prisoner by hobgoblins for four days, marched into the mountains, then moved around seemingly at random within ancient catacombs, the PCs likely understand why a particular captive can't remember whether the hallway is 40 feet or 50 feet long. Adronsius is an exception; as a dwarf, he has an instinctive grasp of

underground space that make his recollections of the places he has been more accurate.

None of the captives are effective combatants. They can wield captured weapons, but they attack only in extremis and prefer to stay well behind the PCs. It's easiest to just give them a turn at initiative point 0, moving them away from potential threats. If you need combat statistics for them, give them 15 hit points, 12 in all defenses, a speed of 6, and a melee basic attack at +0 for 1d4 damage if unarmed and 1d8 damage if armed.

Jalissa: Jalissa is an acolyte of Ioun who is held in room 16. She hysterically clings to whichever PC comes through the door from room 15 first. She does anything that PC says without question, and she looks for approval from that PC if someone else tries to give her even an innocuous order.

Jalissa isn't a spellcaster per se, but she is trained in the arcane arts (Arcana +10) and knows the following rituals: *comprehend language, silence,* and *eye of alarm*. She doesn't have the alchemical reagents or residuum, but the PCs might have some reagents, and they can find some residuum in room 7—just down the stairs from where the hobgoblins are holding Jalissa.

Jalissa also knows that Thurann, the 8-year-old boy, is being held somewhere nearby—she heard him shouting only a few hours ago. They were held together in room 16 until yesterday, and Thurann proved adept at stealing extra food for himself and Jalissa.

Sertanian: Sertanian, the castellan of the Hall of Great Valor, is held in room 6. Sertanian tries to weather his captivity with dignity, and when rescued, he brushes off questions about his captivity as "Just a few hard days, nothing more. Let's get on with the rescue, shall we?" But Sertanian has a past—he served as a soldier during the great "Red Hand" invasion years ago. So he has an utter hatred of hobgoblins that comes out the first time he's present when the PCs battle goblins or hobgoblins. Sertanian hurls invective, taunts the hobgoblins, and recommends that any unconscious ones be "put to the sword" immediately.

Sertanian is the only captive who can identify the treasures from the Hall of Great Valor on sight (they've been his responsibility for years). He also knows that Mirtala the cook is being held downstairs in a chamber near a spiral staircase with frescos on the walls. The hobgoblins sent Sertanian away (perhaps a day ago—Sertanian has lost track of time), saying that the plump Mirtala will make a better meal. And he suspects that Kartenix is dead; Kartenix told Sertanian a couple of days ago that he was going to try to overpower the

THE QUESTS

"Rescue at Rivenroar" offers the opportunity for PCs to earn quest XP in a couple of places. Provided here is the list of quests, and their rewards, in the adventure.

Major Quest—Rescue

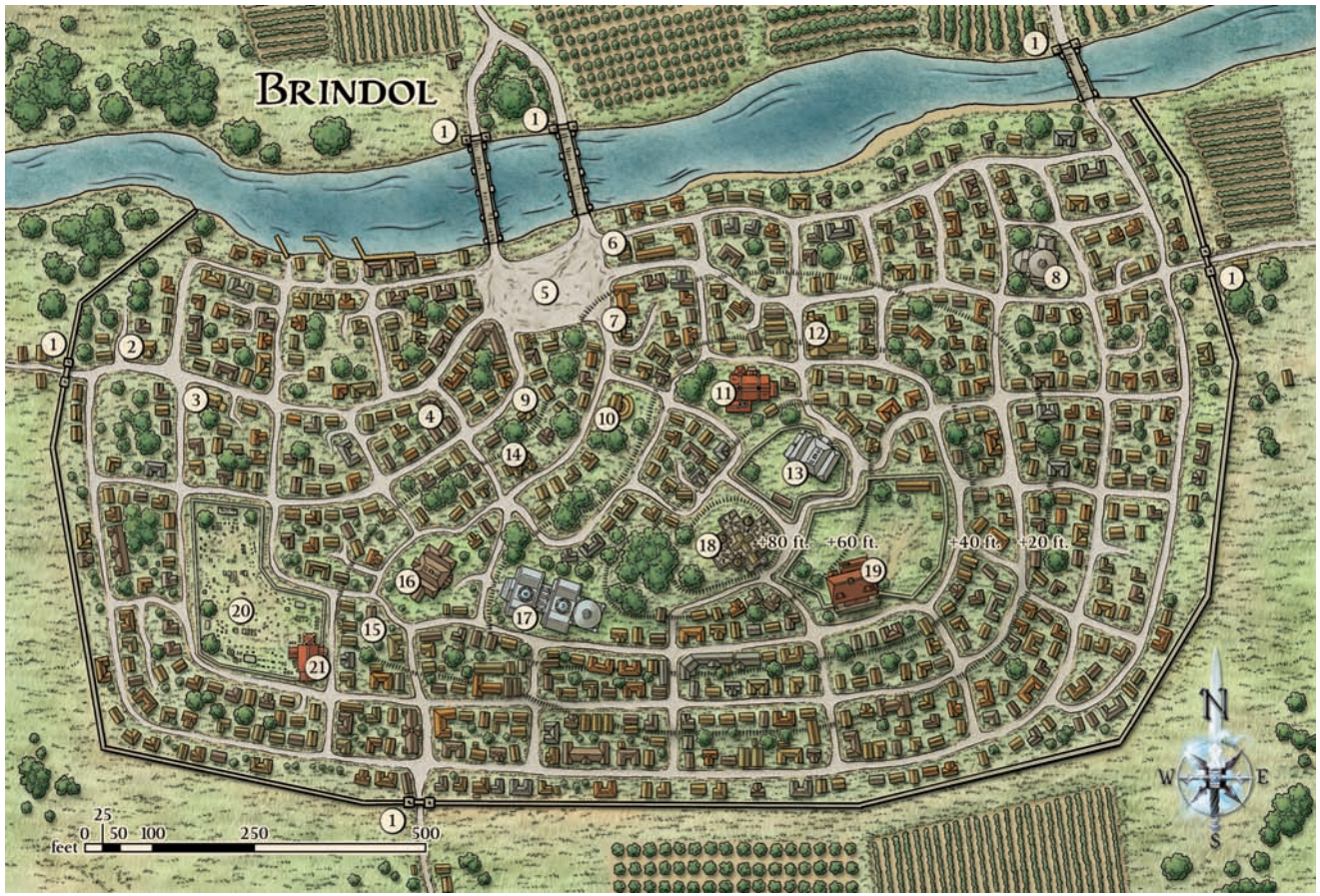
Rescuing the prisoners from Rivenroar amounts to a major quest. The PCs don't earn the quest XP until the prisoners' fate has been determined, and those still living returned to Brindol.

Reward: 500 XP (and 200 gp if the prisoners are returned).

Minor Quest—Treasure

Returning the stolen items described in The Treasure to Brindol results in the PCs fulfilling the quest conditions and earning the XP.

Reward: 100 XP (and the 200 gp promised in The Treasure).



ettercap guarding him the following morning by pretending to be asleep. But then they moved Kartenix, so Sertanian doesn't know where he is.

Thurann: The 8-year-old son of Kartenix the guard captain, Thurann is held in room 17. Thurann is a brave, observant boy. Outwardly, he's handling his ordeal better than many of the adults. He even stole food for Jalissa and himself. Since he reached Rivenroar, Thurann spent most of his time with Jalissa while keeping an eye out for his father. Yesterday they moved him from room 16 to room 17, but they took a roundabout path so Thurann doesn't know how close he is. Thurann also knows that "the old witch" Zerriksa is being held in a "magic circle just beyond the big room with all the mushrooms downstairs"—the hobgoblins brought Thurann down there to threaten him in front of Zerriksa.

Thurann has some skills you wouldn't expect the son of a watch captain to have. Despite his small size, he has Athletics +7 and Thievery +9. And while he can't really fight, he's brave when it comes to climbing or handling other hazards. The only thing that makes Thurann upset is incontrovertible evidence that his father is dead, and he is distrustful of anyone who doubts that "my father said he'd figure out a way to escape and then come rescue me."

Mirtala: The cook Mirtala is held in room 10. Mirtala has been bitten repeatedly by the dire rats in room 10 and has filth fever. She's almost catatonic with fear and it takes careful diplomacy (described in the room 10 encounter) to persuade her to say anything.

Mirtala knows that Adronsius is being held upstairs in "a family crypt . . . the name started with J, but I don't remember it exactly." And she was held with Sertanian briefly, so she knows that he was held someplace that's "up a spiral staircase, then around a bunch of corners and down two separate flights of stairs" from room 10. That was several days ago, though. She also thought she heard Kartenix's voice during that blindfolded walk, so he might be somewhere on that path.

Zerriksa: The crone Zerriksa is held in room 12. She resists as passively as a woman in her seventies can manage. A naturally cranky woman, she has made her captors more than a little miserable. And she has played on the rumors in Brindol and intimated she might have "dark powers," hoping that she'd scare the hobgoblins into treating her better.

Her plan worked—to a point. The hobgoblins put Zerriksa inside a magic trap in room 12, hoping she wouldn't be able to turn them into toads once she was inside. Now she's stuck there, but at least the hobgoblins are giving her a wide berth.

Everyone in Brindol thinks that Zerriksa is a witch, but she's really just an accomplished herbalist (Heal +9, Nature +9). While they can't attack her directly,

the gnomes and ettercaps have been trying to intimidate her and perhaps persuade her to switch sides. Two days ago the ettercaps showed her Kartenix's corpse, half-wrapped in webbing. And yesterday one of the gnomes brought the boy Thurann to the edge of the circle and threatened to slit his throat.

Zerriksa doesn't care for her fellow prisoners, but she knows that she wouldn't last long with the denizens of Rivenroar once they realized she has no magic powers. So she's just playing out her bluff and biding her time.

Adronsius: Adronsius the alchemist is held in room 14. For some reason, the hobgoblins are particularly keen on beating dwarves, and Adronsius has borne the brunt of their physical abuse. All the prisoners have been roughed up a little, but Adronsius has been beat bloody every day since the hobgoblins took him prisoner. When the PCs rescue Adronsius, he has only 5 hit points out of 15.

While Adronsius is an accomplished alchemist, he has none of the tools of his trade and so can't mix anything up until he gets back to Brindol. He knows Mirtala is alive, but he isn't sure where they're keeping her. And he was brought to the upper level for an interrogation session where he saw Jelissa.

Because he's a dwarf, Adronsius remembers the way pretty well—for a guy who was blindfolded. It was "down the stairs, straight across the entry chamber, turning left in the room that smelled of goblin, then left again in the room with the crackling sound, around two right corners, then through a room that smelled of the dead, then up the stairs to a room with a sticky floor, right and up another set of stairs, then through a dusty room and left through a door. That good enough directions for ya?"

Kartenix: Kartenix the guard captain is now deceased. His body is in room 7. He tried to overpower the ettercaps, who've webbed him up. They intend to scare the other prisoners with the corpse for a while and then consume it. The PCs can bring his body back to Brindol for a decent burial if they wish.

THE TREASURE

The people of Brindol want their friends and neighbors back; that's their primary concern. But they also want some of the treasures back from their "Hall of Great Valor." Most of the "treasures" have little or no intrinsic value. They're museum pieces from the "Red Hand" invasion many years ago. But the sentimental value to the town is immense. PCs can earn an additional 100 XP (plus the 200 gp reward) when the following items are brought back to Brindol.

- ✦ Ornate, gilded dragoncrest helm (room 21).
- ✦ Ceremonial platinum longsword; too heavy and blunt to be useful as a weapon (room 23).
- ✦ Set of three shields with the Red Hand insignia, each with a charred hole near the center (room 23).
- ✦ Set of iron gauntlets with extensive filigree (room 21).
- ✦ Heraldic battle standard depicting two hands clasped in a handshake (room 23).

BRINDOL

First visited in the 3rd edition adventure ***Red Hand of Doom***, Brindol has a smaller population than it did before the events of that adventure. But the last decade has brought mild prosperity to the region, with only bandits (such as Sinruth and his ilk) disturbing the peace.

Population: 6,700; another 1,000 live within a five-mile radius of the town itself. The people of Brindol are mostly humans, half-elves, and dwarves. The town's population swells by several hundred whenever some connected halfling clans known as "the river people" are in town.

Government: A town has a council, two-thirds of whom are hereditary landlords and the remainder of whom are guildmasters from the city's important trade guilds. Lord Warden Harrik Orenna is the public face of the council and commander of the city militia.

Defense: The city has 200 soldiers under arms at all times, with about one-quarter on duty at any given time. In times of crisis, the Lord Warden has access to another 200 well-equipped but poorly trained soldiers by calling up the militia.

Inns: Chatrenn and Sons; The Red Door; Avandrian Hostel; The Silk and Spoon; Pantashi Inn.

Taverns: Ilya's Cardhouse; The Marooned Schooner; Cleftie's; Brindol Gentleman's Club; the Blue Parrot; the Antler and Thistle.

Major Guilds: Prospectors; Blacksmiths and Smelters; Teamsters and Farriers; Weavers; River Bargemen (halfling controlled).

Supplies: Alchemy by Adronsius (currently closed); Gavriel Arms and Smithy; Staghunter Outfitters; Alpenglow Trading House.

Temples: Temple of Erathis; College of Ioun; Shrine of the Sun (Pelor); Moondust Temple (Sehanine); Shrine of Bahamut (no permanent clergy); Shrine of the Open Door (Avandra).

Preparing for Adventure

"Rescue at Rivenroar" introduces the characters to one another and kicks off the new Scales of War Adventure Path. This Adventure Path takes the characters across the countryside of the Elsir Vale and into a deadly dungeon, where they face Sinruth's Hand, a force of goblins, hobgoblins, and other monsters bent on the conquest of the Vale and its environs.

As a DM, the best way to spend your precious preparation time is by looking at the encounters ahead of time so that you can give yourself a sneak preview of how each room will play out. No one knows your table better than you do, so you can foresee how the monstrous denizens of the Rivenroar catacombs interact with the specific players at your table. If you want to jump straight into the action, see the Kicking Off the Action Quickly sidebar for details.

What You Need to Play

This adventure includes the encounters the PCs face as they explore and adventure in the area. It also provides tactical maps and more for the adventure. If you and your players haven't read through the Dungeons & Dragons *4th Edition* rules yet, that is your first best step so that you make certain you understand the rules. Also as mentioned above, read through at least the first few encounters described in this adventure before starting. This review enables you to become familiar with the material and the style of presentation. You might also want to take a look at the sections below regarding the adventure format.

TREASURE PARCELS

Parcel A: _____, room 5.
Parcel B: _____, room 5.
Parcel C: _____, room 7.
Parcel D: _____, room 9.
Parcel E: _____, room 9.
Parcel F: _____, room 9.
Parcel G: _____, room 15.
Parcel H: _____, room 15.
Parcel I: _____, room 17.
Parcel J: _____, room 21.
Parcel K: _____, room 21.
Parcel L: _____, room 24.
Parcel M: _____, room 24.
Parcel N: _____, room 24.

Based on the guidelines in the ***Dungeon Master's Guide,*** the following parcels can go in the lines above. Rely on the wish lists your players gave you for the first four parcels.

Parcel 1: Magic item, level 5
Parcel 2: Magic item, level 5
Parcel 3: Magic item, level 4
Parcel 4: Magic item, level 3
Parcel 5: Magic item, level 3
Parcel 6: Magic item, level 2
Parcel 7: Two **potions of healing,** 100 gp
Parcel 8: One 100 gp gem, 80 gp
Parcel 9: 260 gp
Parcel 10: One **potion of healing,** 70 gp
Parcel 11: 170 gp
Parcel 12: 100 gp, 200 sp
Parcel 13: One **potion of healing,** 10 gp
Parcel 14: 30 gp, 100 sp

Large or Small Groups: As mentioned above, "Rescue at Rivenroar" is designed for five PCs. If you have more or fewer players at your table, you should adjust the monster and treasure mix according to the rules in the ***Dungeon Master's Guide***. Doing so rarely takes more than a few minutes–it's just a matter of adding or subtracting monsters and treasure parcels here and there. Smaller groups can face fewer monsters and find fewer treasure parcels, while larger groups can face more numerous foes and earn greater rewards (which are split up more ways, naturally).

Using Tactical Encounters

Each encounter includes several common elements, as described below.

Encounter Level

Each tactical encounter assumes a group of five PCs. An encounter of average difficulty is one where the encounter level is equal to the level of the party. Encounters that are 1 or 2 levels lower than the party are easy encounters, while encounters that are 2 or more levels higher than the party are difficult encounters.

For overcoming an encounter, a group earns the XP value listed beside the encounter level. This amount should be divided by the number of group members, and an equal amount should be awarded to each character.

Setup

This section of a tactical encounter provides you with the basic parameters of the encounter. First, it provides context or background information for the encounter. Next, it provides a key to the monsters in the encounter so you can locate them on the tactical map. The map of each encounter area indicates where the monsters are located when the encounter begins. The setup section also describes what monsters are doing and how they react when the PCs arrive.

Read Aloud Text

Read aloud text provides information about what the characters can see and are aware of. You do not have to read it word for word; feel free to paraphrase and use your own words when describing this information. Use read aloud text wisely; they are written for the most common approach to a particular situation and what your player characters do might require you to alter the information in any number of ways.

Monster Statistics

Encounters include stat blocks for each monster type present in the encounter. If more than one monster of a particular kind is present, the stat block indicates how many creatures can be found.

Tactics

This entry describes special actions the monsters take to defeat the adventurers. Sometimes this means the monsters take advantage of special features of the area or make use of special powers or equipment.

Map

Each encounter includes a map keyed with the initial locations of each monster. The map also indicates the location of any special features of the area.

Features of the Area

This section describes special features noted on the map. If the location has items or areas of interest with which the characters can interact, those features are described here. Look here to see if a door is out of the ordinary, if an altar has a secret compartment, or if the area includes treasure.

Treasure Preparation

"Rescue at Rivenroar" employs the "parcel" technique of treasure distribution described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. You need 14 treasure parcels in addition to the rewards from the people of Brindol, which are worth three parcels (return the captives) and two parcels (recover the treasures from the Great Hall of Valor). Consult your players' wish lists, then apportion treasure parcels to the following list:

Starting the Adventure

The default beginning of the adventure, and indeed the campaign, assumes the PCs want some time to explore the city. Feel free to extend events in Brindol during and after the hobgoblin attack. You can do the following, for example:

✦ Give the players plenty of time to talk to each other and to the other bar patrons before the hobgoblins attack. A more measured pace delays the action, but it also gives the players at your table time to "get into character" and learn more about their comrades before the bitumen torches start flying.

✦ Give the PCs some NPC rivals: Brindol locals who think they're brave and capable enough to rescue the prisoners. The locals could be in over their heads (and maybe need rescuing themselves eventually), or they might indeed be capable . . . or at least capable of sabotaging the PCs' efforts.

Connecting Rivenroar to Red Hand of Doom

Sinruth is, at the end of the day, something of a wannabe. He aspires to be part of a great horde like the one that menaced Brindol and the entire region in the *Red Hand of Doom* adventure. We've set the timeline forward by a decade, but the exact time doesn't matter. If it works better for you, then by all means place the original Red Hand of Doom anywhere from a year to a century in the past, but adjust the story behind the adventure accordingly. As long as the (embellished) tale of hobgoblins on the march finds its way to young Sinruth's ears, the villains' motivation is intact.

But you don't need to have played *Red Hand of Doom* to play "Rescue at Rivenroar." There's merely a common thread of history that connects the two adventures. The hobgoblins in this adventure hope to become something like the great goblin army that once threatened Brindol with utter destruction—destruction averted only by the timely efforts of the adventurers.

Bar Fight!

Encounter Level 1 (580 XP; monsters aren't solely focused on the PCs, however)

Setup

This encounter is a simple affair that introduces the PCs to each other and gives the players a little practice with their new characters. It also shows how surprised Brindol is by the hobgoblin attack.

10 hobgoblin grunts (H)
2 goblin blackblades (G)
8 human rabble (R)

Put three human rabble at the card table in the back, one human behind the bar, and the rest scattered around the tavern as you see fit. Have the players decide where their PCs are sitting. The monsters begin the fight outside the bar, and a few of them come in the front door every round.

Once the players have described to the rest of the table what their characters look like and what they're doing at the bar, read or paraphrase the following description:

The gentle hubbub of an evening at the Antler and Thistle tavern is shattered by the crack of the front door flying off its hinges to land amid the nearest tables. Four hobgoblins rush into the bar, swords outstretched to skewer the nearest bar patrons. "For Sinruth! For the Hand!" they cry.

Tactics

The fight begins when four of the hobgoblin grunts burst through the door. They attack the bar patrons (probably wounding or killing a couple of them). Then roll initiative.

More goblins come through the door each round. Move the following creatures in the room at the hobgoblin's initiative point each round.

Round 2: 3 hobgoblins and 1 goblin blackblade enter. The blackblade throws a bitumen torch at the bottles of alcohol behind the bar.

Round 3: 2 hobgoblins enter.

Round 4: 1 hobgoblin and 1 goblin blackblade enter. The new blackblade throws a bitumen torch at the card table.

At first, the goblins attack the closest person. No more than two hobgoblins at a time fight each PC, with the rest menacing the bar patrons and serving wenches. But by the third round, the goblins realize that the PCs are the only ones providing resistance, so they start ignoring the other bar patrons.

The goblin blackblades have been given instructions to focus on property damage, so they throw their bitumen torches rather than engage in melee if given a chance.

10 Hobgoblin Grunts (H) — **Level 3 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 38

Initiative +4 — **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin grunt suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin grunt rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin grunt gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil — **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +6, History +2

Str 18 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 13 (+1)
Con 15 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 9 (-1)

Equipment leather armor, light shield, longsword

2 Goblin Blackblades (G) — **Level 1 Lurker**
Small natural humanoid — XP 100

Initiative +7 — **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 25; **Bloodied** 12
AC 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11
Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

Bitumen Torch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. Reflex; 1d4 damage; starts a fire in that square whether it hits or misses (see "Spreading the Fire" sidebar above). Each blackblade has one lit torch when it enters the bar.

Combat Advantage
The goblin blackblade deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin shifts 1 square.

Sneaky
When shifting, a goblin blackblade can move into a space occupied by an ally of its level or lower. The ally shifts into the blackblade's previous space as a free action.

Alignment Evil — **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 8 (-1)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, 3 bitumen torches

8 Human Rabble (R) — **Level 2 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 31

Initiative +0 — **Senses** Perception +0
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11; see also *mob rule*
Speed 6

Club (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Mob Rule
The human rabble gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other human rabble are within 5 squares of it.

Alignment Any — **Languages** Common

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	**Int** 9 (-1)	**Cha** 11 (+0)

Equipment club

The PCs are the only bar patrons who fight back effectively. The others flee, freeze, or fight poorly, only to die on the hobgoblins' swords.

The hobgoblins are flush with easy victory so far, and they don't flee even when the fight turns against them. But the blackblades might slink away if it looks like they'll die otherwise. Don't let them flee with unused torches, however.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light. The area is illuminated by several lanterns.

Tables: The tables are all tall enough that a Small creature can move under them and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then grant cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

The Bar: The bartender hunkers down behind the bar, which provides cover against ranged and melee attacks. It takes a DC 30 Athletics check to jump up on the bar with a standing high jump and a DC 15 check to do it with a 2-square running start. If any of squares behind the bar catch on fire, then they all catch fire at the end of the blackblade's next turn. That's high-proof stuff back there.

The Patrons: The bar patrons aren't all human (though most are), but it's easiest to use the human rabble stat block for them all. Assume that they act on initiative point 0. If an interesting course of action doesn't suggest itself, just roll 1d6 for each of them. A result of 1 or 2 means they freeze, cower, or move behind nearby cover. A 3 or 4 means they flee out the nearest door as long as they can do so without suffering an opportunity attack. A 5 or 6 means they grab an improvised weapon such as a chair, bottle, or table cutlery (a +4 attack at 1d8 damage for them).

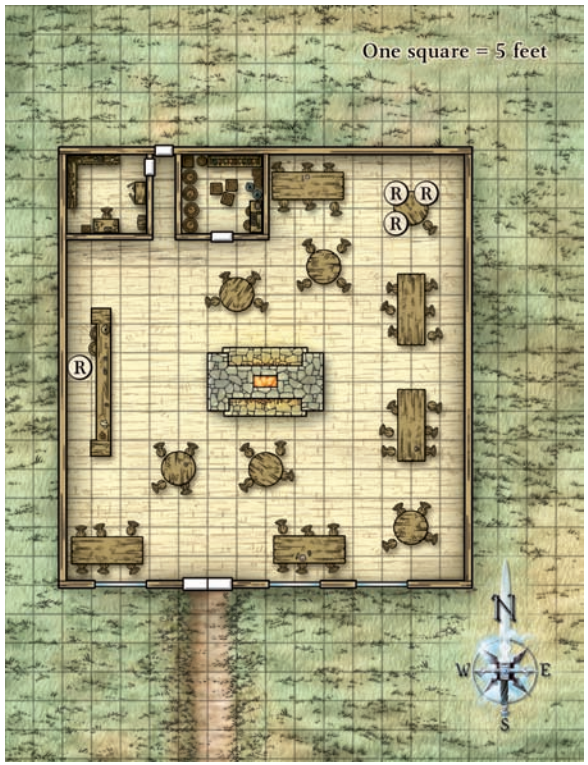
Improvised Weapons: The great thing about this tavern (other than the beer) is that it's full of improvised weapons such as chairs, bottles, table cutlery, kebob skewers, and bowls of hot stew. Behind your screen, all improvised weapons are treated the same: They're 1d8 weapons that confer no proficiency bonus. For the bar patrons, that means they can make +4 attacks dealing 4 damage. If a PC uses an improvised weapon, it deals 1d8 + Strength modifier damage.

Card Table: There's 30 gp stacked here. The three bar patrons sitting here won't flee—not while there's money on the table, at any rate.

Handling All the NPCs

Almost all the NPCs in this battle go down in a single hit. And the whole point of the encounter is to introduce the PCs to each other and give the players at your table a little practice with new characters and new rules. So you needn't be a stickler for tracking the exact position and welfare of each NPC—especially the bar patrons.

As a DM, you have better ways to spend your time than figuring out the exact details of NPC-on-NPC violence (after all, how many NPCs are sitting at your table?). It's fine to just toss 1d20 when a hobgoblin attacks the bartender. A high roll means the bartender dies, a medium roll means he's wounded, and a low roll means he's unscathed. If you want a hobgoblin to put one of the serving wenches in a headlock and try to drag her out into the street, just do it—don't keep your players waiting while you work out the details of the grab attack.



Windows: If a creature is pushed through the windows at the front of the bar (such as from a bull rush), it takes an extra 1d6 damage from the glass.

Aftermath

When the hobgoblins have been defeated, the surviving bar patrons organize a bucket brigade from a nearby well to quell the fire. A clearly wounded city watch patrol arrives as the bucket brigade douses the last flames, and they quickly try to learn what's happening from anyone who speaks to them (probably the PCs). This conversation gives the PCs enough time to have a short rest before the next encounter.

The Ogre Bombardier

Encounter Level 1 (650 XP)

Setup

The PCs do battle with more of the marauders menacing the town of Brindol.

1 ogre savage (O)
2 hobgoblin archers (H)

Have the ogre round the corner north of the main tavern entrance, pulling the pitch wagon behind him. The archers ride atop the wagon. One is lighting pitch casks and handing them to the ogre while the other one shoots arrows at any fleeing townsfolk.
When the players place their PC miniatures near the tavern door, read:

As you've been talking to the guards, you've been hearing shouts in the distance. But now those shouts are a lot closer, and a throng of townsfolk comes running around the street corner to the north.

They're fleeing a curious sight: a full-grown ogre pulling a wagon by a yoke around its waist. The ogre holds a cask in one hand and a massive club in the other. Riding atop the wagon are two hobgoblins with bows.

Tactics

These monsters are focused on property destruction, and they haven't faced serious opposition yet, so they might be slow to take the PCs seriously.

If the hobgoblins beat the ogre's initiative, they delay until the ogre throws his cask.

2 Hobgoblin Archers (H) **Level 3 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Speed 6

(+) **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

(+) **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin archer grants an ally within 5 squares of it a +2 bonus to its next ranged attack roll against the same target.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin archer suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin archer rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +5, History +6
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

Ogre Savage (O) **Level 8 Brute**
Large natural humanoid XP 350

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4
HP 111; **Bloodied** 55
AC 19; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 8

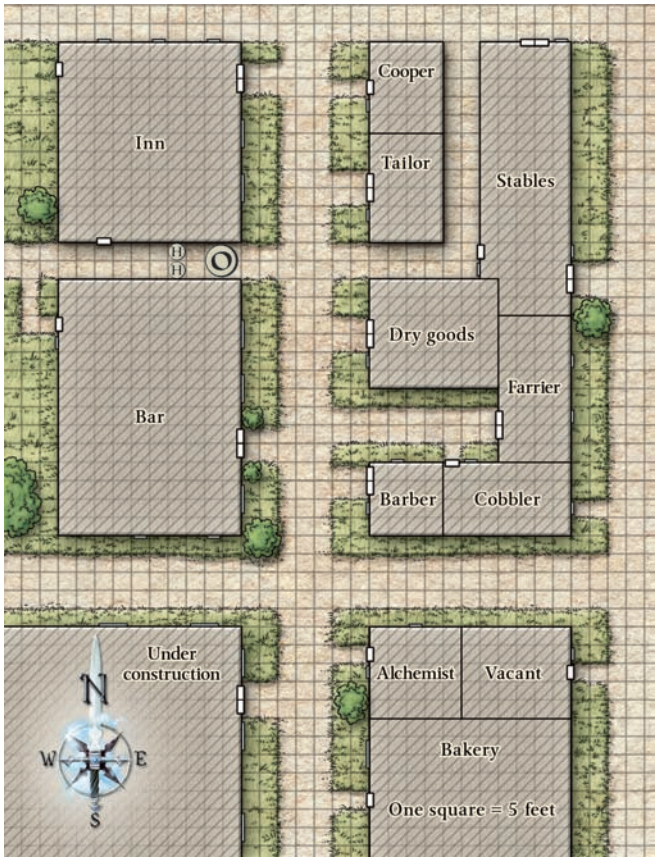
(+) **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage.

(+) **Pitch Cask** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20; -1 vs. Reflex; 2d6 fire damage, then the pitch cask explodes as described in Pitch Cask section.

Angry Smash (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
The ogre savage makes a greatclub attack, but gets two attack rolls and takes the better result.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 11 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+4)
Con 21 (+9) **Int** 4 (+1) **Cha** 6 (+2)
Equipment hide armor, greatclub

In the first round, the ogre throws a cask in the PCs' direction; he's unlikely to hit, but it's a useful demonstration of the casks' potential. (See the Features of the Area for rules on hitting and missing with the casks.) One hobgoblin shoots at the PCs, while the other one lights another pitch cask (a standard action) then picks it up and hands it to the ogre for next round (two minor actions).



After the first round, the hobgoblins take their cues from what the ogre is doing. The ogre moves forward and throws a cask if no one is within reach 2 at the end of its 4-square move. But once it starts making melee attacks, it stops throwing casks, and then both hobgoblins shoot their bows.

The hobgoblins flee if reduced to 5 hit points or fewer or if one of the PCs rushes the wagon with a lit

Spreading Fire

Whether the blackblades' bitumen torches hit or not, they light the square they're in on fire. A creature in a square that's on fire takes 1d6 damage at the start of the blackblade's turn. At the end of the blackblade's next turn, roll 1d8 for each square that's on fire to see where it spreads. The square to the north catches fire on a 1, to the northeast on 2, east on 3, southeast on 4, south on 5, southwest on 6, west on 7, and northwest on 8. Over successive rounds, the fire should spread at an increasingly rapid rate.

torch or other obvious source of fire in hand. The ogre doesn't flee outright—being yoked to the wagon makes a retreat difficult in any case—but he might try to leave the area if faced with fire. Additionally, if fewer than half of the monsters remain, they attempt to escape.

Features of the Area

Wagon: The wagon is 2 squares by 3 squares, with the hobgoblins riding in the forward 2 squares. While yoked to the wagon, the ogre has a speed of only 4. The ogre and the hobgoblins collectively must spend 2 standard actions to free the ogre from the wagon yoke. If the casks on the back of the wagon take at least 5 fire damage, they start to explode. The casks in one of the 4 squares in the back of the wagon detonate each round. Each explosion is a +6 attack against Reflex defense in a burst 3 area, dealing 3d6 fire damage (half on miss). When the first casks explode, tell the players that it's clear that not all the casks have exploded yet, and that the wagon is afire. When the explosions are over, the wreckage of the wagon becomes difficult terrain that deals 1d6 fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in a wagon square.

Pitch Casks: These casks are filled with roofing pitch, which is flammable enough to make a primitive bomb. The ogre can hurl a lit pitch cask as a standard action. It has lousy aim, however. After choosing a target square for the attack, roll 1d8 (for direction) and 1d4–1 (for distance) to see where the pitch cask actually lands. This becomes the origin square for a burst 1 attack. The pitch cask lands 1d4–1 squares to the north on a d8 result of 1, 1d4–1 squares to the northeast on 2, east on 3, southeast on 4, south on 5, southwest on 6, west on 7, and northwest on 8.

Pitch Cask

Filled with roofing pitch, this cask is flammable enough to make a primitive bomb.

Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Dexterity vs. Reflex
Special: The pitch cask rarely lands where the ogre wants it to. See the text above for details.
Hit: 3d6 fire damage.
Effect: The origin square of the burst burns for the rest of the encounter. Any character entering the square or starting his turn in the square takes 1d6 fire damage.

Aftermath

A crowd gathers after the PCs defeat the ogre, and more guards arrive a few minutes later. They immediately ask for the PCs' help defending the bridge. But by the time the PCs reach the bridge, Sinruth's band has already retreated. The residents of Brindol spend the rest of the night putting out the fires that the goblins set, tending to the wounded, and keeping a nervous watch from the ramparts.

Fighting the Ogre and the Fire!

Under ordinary circumstances, level 8 brutes aren't appropriate for level 1 PCs. But the PCs have a key advantage: the wagon attached to the ogre's waist. The presence of the wagon means the ogre can't effectively chase the PCs, so PCs can flee if they need to do so.

Depending on the PCs at your table, you might have another problem: the ogre's outrageous 111 hit points. Some PCs can deal a lot of damage even at 1st level, and others might blow up the wagon while the ogre is still attached (meaning the ogre takes the explosion damage for 4 consecutive rounds). If neither of those situations applies at your table, it's fine to have the ogre die early. There's no sense in slogging through a long fight whose outcome is obvious to everyone at your table.

As for the fire, PCs can put out an adjacent square of fire as a standard action. A minor action keeps an adjacent square of fire from spreading during that round. Reward your PCs for other creative methods of putting out a fire (such as using a cold-based power to douse one or more squares simultaneously).

The next morning, the full extent of Sinruth's attack is known, including the captives taken and the treasures stolen from the Hall of Great Valor. At that point, the PCs receive the job offer from the Brindol town council. They can either try to track the goblins through the wilderness, or they can first try interrogating a captured hobgoblin currently held in the town stockades.

The Summons

Councilmember Eoffram Troyas is a new addition to the Brindol city council. As such, he is less prone to the traditional means of accomplishing important tasks. In a short time, he has established a reputation as an outspoken, and sometimes combative, public figure. A half-elf, he has shown little of his race's good-natured tendency toward patience.

One of Troyas's most recent controversial remarks was that he intended to use adventurers to aid in cutting down on recent bandit attacks in the Elsir Vale. Other members of the council—despite the city's recent history and survival thanks to the efforts of adventurers—were dubious, but willing to give Councilmember Troyas's policy a chance—to fail. Many of the more entrenched public figures secretly believe that the mercurial nature of adventurers makes them eminently unsuitable for the defense of the city. At least, that's their public stance. Privately, rumors on the street continue to circulate about graft and embezzlement among the council, causing many to wonder if such members of the council would rather see the funds that are used to hire adventurers end up in their pockets.

As soon as the PCs have defeated the ogre, word reaches Councilmember Troyas within the day. The assaults upon the city proper are a fresh outrage, especially to a man who lost his family to the Red Hand's assault ten years earlier. He doesn't have blind faith in the PCs, however, and wants to meet them himself.

The Councilmember has several goals in his meeting with the characters. Before he promises them any money, he wants to ascertain their motivations. He's not looking for absolute trust, but he doesn't want his faith to be misplaced. He already has a fair idea of their competence after the ogre battle, so this meeting is mostly a formality and a roleplaying opportunity. Councilmember Troyas is a somber man, who speaks carefully and methodically. He maintains eye contact, and attempts at levity are met with a long, cold stare, followed by a reminder about the nature of the threat to Brindol.

If you're interested in making the meeting with Councilmember Troyas more than just a roleplaying encounter, consider the following skill challenge. Refer to The Quests sidebar on page 7 for information about the quests and their rewards.

Skill Challenge

As Councilmember Eoffram Troyas greets you solemnly, he makes eye contact with each of you in turn. "I am considering something, and I wished to speak to you about it in person—and in private."

This skill challenge is a social challenge that allows Troyas to determine the character of the PCs and also allows the PCs to take the job for the rescue effort. This might be a good opportunity for each player to introduce himself or herself "in character" and describe the sorts of things the character can do in a dangerous situation.

Setup: For Troyas to provide full assistance, the PCs need to convince him of their trustworthiness and that they can handle the challenges he sets them.

Level: 1.

XP: 200

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Insight, History.

Diplomacy (DC 15): You attempt to convince Troyas that your goals and his match up nicely, or that you are the right person for what he has in mind. The first success with this skill opens up the use of the History skill (Troyas mentions the Red Hand's attacks ten years ago).

Insight (DC 15): You empathize with Troyas and use that knowledge to encourage assistance. First success with this skill reveals that any use of the Intimidate skill earns a failure.

History (DC 13): You make an insightful remark about the attack 10 years ago. This is available only after one character has gained a success using the Diplomacy skill, and it can be used only once in this way during the challenge.

Intimidate: Troyas refuses to be intimidated by the PCs. Each use of this skill earns a failure.

Success: Troyas gives the PCs the deal outlined above, as well as the promise of "whatever aid the good people of Brindol can muster."

Failure: Troyas gives the PCs the deal outlined above, but more reluctantly. In addition, the PCs find the rest of the town council reluctant to deal with them (-2 penalty on later skill checks made to influence the council until the quest is successful), and they receive vague warnings that failure to achieve rapid results can cause them to be replaced. Finally, the council halves the monetary reward for bringing prisoners back.

Interrogating Morrik

This is unlikely to end up as a combat encounter, although the statistics for the main players are provided, just in case.

Setup

In this skill challenge, the PCs try to learn as much information as they can from Morrik, a hobgoblin captured in the raid on Brindol.

Exact positioning doesn't matter in this encounter, because it's not a battle. Assume the PCs are within earshot of Morrik throughout the skill challenge.

When the PCs arrive at the town green, read:

Just as the guards said, there's a lone hobgoblin in stocks and shackles here. His wounds from last night's battle have been bandaged, but a number of tomatoes on the ground near him and on the surface of the stocks indicate that his treatment hasn't been completely kind.

He takes one weary look at you and says, "I ain't saying nothin' unless you people let me go."

Skill Challenge

Level: 1.
XP: 200

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate.

Bluff (DC 20): You try the threat of extensive violence or long imprisonment. If you convince the guards to play along, you receive a +5 bonus to the check.

Diplomacy (DC 15): You try to cut a deal. If the guards hear you directly offer Morrik his freedom, they'll tell Morrik, "You aren't getting away, hobgoblin." That closes off this approach.

History (DC 13): You ask about the crimson hand insignia on the hobgoblin's tunic in an effort to make the hobgoblin to open up about Sinruth's band and its plans.

Intimidate (DC 15): You use subtle or overt threats involving Morrik's safety. A failure means that Morrik doesn't respect you as a warrior; it closes off this approach and increases the DCs of other checks by 2 for the duration of the challenge.

Hobgoblin Soldier **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 5

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.

Formation Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin soldier rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +10, History +8

Str 19 (+5)	**Dex** 14 (+3)	**Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 11 (+1)	**Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail

2 Human Guards **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23
AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14
Speed 5

⊕ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the human guard's next turn.

Powerful Strike (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires halberd; reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common
Skills Streetwise +7

Str 16 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+3)	**Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 10 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+2)

Equipment chainmail, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts

Success: The PCs learn that Sinruth is the leader of the goblins, and he eventually wants to raise an army and carve out a fiefdom of his own. The goblins are using catacombs under the ruins of Castle Rivenroar as a base for now. Morrik and the other hobgoblins were ordered to take prisoners during the raid to give to the "undead horrors" that guard part of the goblins' lair. Morrik draws a crude map of the mountain path that leads to Castle Rivenroar.

Morrik doesn't know anything about the treasures taken from the Hall of Great Valor. "Must have been Sinruth himself, I suppose, because he didn't say anything about it," he says.

In addition, if the PCs used History for at least two of the successes, they learn that Sinruth and the goblins see themselves as descendants of the Red Hand horde that menaced Brindol years ago. But it's also apparent to a student of history that they have no

No Rough Stuff

The town guards don't mind the occasional slap or punch, and they aren't against threats of violence (as long as their own Insight checks reveal that they're indeed threats and not stated intent). With the whole town watching, however, they do not put up with persistent violence. "We need him to be healthy and well treated for trial," one says. "And the last thing this town needs is mob violence right now."

The other guard points out a different (and more pragmatic) reason for not getting physical with the prisoner. "Goblins are cowards at heart, and if you start breaking fingers or whatever, they'll say anything to make the pain stop. You'll just get a bunch of lies," he says to a PC, out of the hobgoblin's earshot.

actual connection with the historic Red Hand. They're flying the Red Hand insignia upside-down, for starters.

Failure: As success, except that Morrik's map leads the PCs on a circuitous route to Rivenroar—a path that takes them right into a kruthik nest.

Features of the Area

The Town Guards: The two guards here have been given simple orders by the town council: Keep the prisoner alive . . . but *keep* the prisoner. They do not consent to letting him out of the stocks.

Stocks: The hobgoblin is shackled with his head and arms through the stocks. Breaking him free requires either the use of the guards' key or the PCs must somehow pick the lock without the guards noticing. Then it takes a standard action to let Morrik out of the stocks.

Tracking the Goblins

Hot on the trail of the hobgoblins and their captives, the PCs head into the mountains northeast of Brindol. In this skill challenge, they must track the goblins to their lair while staying safe from the other dangers of the wilderness.

During the challenge the PCs roll multiple sets of skill checks; each set equates to roughly an hour or two of travel. Typically one character makes a Nature check, another makes a Perception check, and everyone makes Endurance checks. In each set of checks, a character can assist only one other character's check.

Skill Challenge

Level: 1.

XP: 300

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Perception, Nature, Endurance.

Perception (DC 18): One or more PCs watch for signs that the hobgoblins have passed this way and otherwise keep the rest of the travelers on track. Only one character can attempt this check in each set of checks, but other characters can assist if they're not already assisting another check (see above). If the PCs got a map from Morrik (whether it's a good map or the map that leads to the kruthiks), they can worry less about following the tracks of the goblins and gain a +5 bonus on the check. A successful check counts as one success toward completing the skill challenge (maximum five successes). A failed check means that the PCs lose their way temporarily, extending the duration of the trek by 1 hour.

Nature (DC 15): One or more PCs use their talent to guide the group around dead ends and natural hazards such as unstable rock slopes. Only one character can attempt this check in each set of checks, but other characters can assist if they're not already assisting another check (see above). A successful check counts as one success toward completing the skill challenge (maximum five successes). A failed check indicates that the PCs had to take a treacherous detour that adds one hour to the trip and requires each PC to succeed on a DC 10 Athletics check or lose one healing surge from a nasty fall or other accident (these Athletics checks don't count as successes or failures toward the skill challenge).

Endurance (DC 10): In each set of checks, each character must roll an Endurance check to resist the effects of altitude and exposure to bad mountain weather. If at least three characters in the group succeed, this counts as a success toward the skill challenge (maximum four successes; but keep rolling after this number is reached to check for failures). If two characters succeed, it is neither a success nor a failure. If one or no characters succeed, each member of the group loses one healing surge, in addition to counting as a failure for the challenge. For every two additional characters in the party above or below five, add +1 to the number of successful rolls required for a success. For every two characters less than five, decrease it by 1.

Success: The PCs reach the ruins of Rivenroar Castle without incident. The trip takes 8 hours, plus one hour per failed Perception or Nature check.

Failure: The trip leads the PCs right into a monster lair. Use the kruthik encounter if the PCs either received no map or a good map from Morrik. If the PCs ended up with a bad map, they're going to have the kruthik encounter anyway. In that case, let them stumble into the hunting grounds of a cave bear.

After dealing with the monster, the PCs still haven't reached Rivenroar Castle. They must repeat the task at complexity 1 (requiring four successes before three failures) to reach Rivenroar thereafter.

Cave Bear	**Level 6 Elite Brute**
Medium natural beast	XP 500
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 170; **Bloodied** 85	
AC 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
✧ **Cave Bear Frenzy** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +10 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 20 (+8)	**Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	**Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Kruthik Ambush

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

Setup

PCs encounter these hunting kruthiks in one of two ways: by failing the challenge to interrogate Morrik, or by failing the challenge to track the hobgoblins.

2 kruthik adults (A)
2 kruthik young (Y)

The kruthik adults and young emerge from a tunnel beneath the rock to the north when the PCs reach roughly the middle of the map. Midway through the battle, they might be joined by these creatures:

4 kruthik hatchlings (in the nest to the west)

When the PCs have placed themselves along the path, read:

This canyon winds between two ridges. Suddenly, chittering, armored buglike creatures emerge from the ground just north of you and quickly move in your direction.

Tactics

The kruthik young charge into the fray immediately, while the adults hang back. Adults use their *toxic spikes* in the first round. The kruthiks don't flee, but might retreat to the west, hoping to reach the hatchlings there.

Features of the Area

Weak Ground: The marked (!) positions on the map have just a thin layer of rock above abandoned kruthik warrens. It takes a successful DC 15 Perception check or Dungeoneering check to notice cracks in the round that indicate the presence of the warrens.

2 Kruthik Adults (A) — **Level 4 Brute**
Medium natural beast (reptile) — XP 175 each

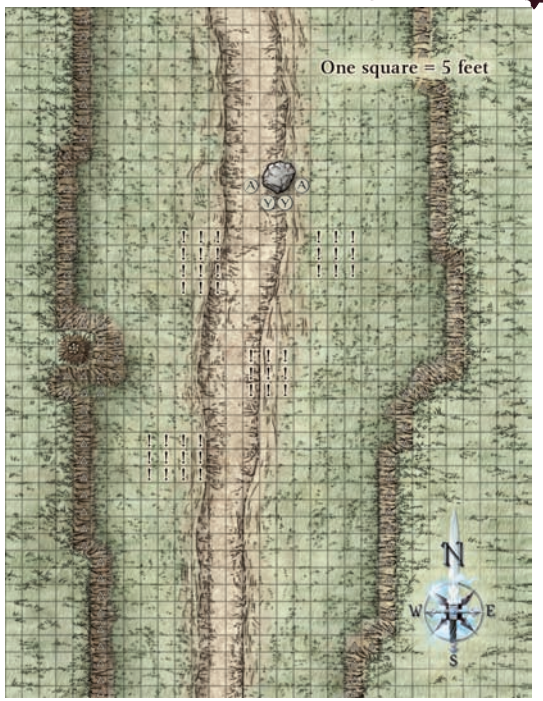
Initiative +6 — **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 2 damage.
HP 67; **Bloodied** 33
AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Speed 6, burrow 3 (tunneling), climb 6
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.
Toxic Spikes (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Poison**
The kruthik makes 2 attacks against two different targets: ranged 5; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).
Alignment Unaligned — **Languages** –
Str 17 (+5) — **Dex** 18 (+6) — **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+5) — **Int** 4 (-1) — **Cha** 8 (+1)

2 Kruthik Young (Y) — **Level 2 Brute**
Small natural beast (reptile) — XP 125 each

Initiative +4 — **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 2 damage.
HP 43; **Bloodied** 21
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11
Speed 8, burrow 2, climb 8
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.
Alignment Unaligned — **Languages** –
Str 15 (+3) — **Dex** 16 (+4) — **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2) — **Int** 4 (-2) — **Cha** 6 (-1)

If a PC steps into one of those squares, the area of weak ground gives way. The PC must immediately make a saving throw or fall 10 feet (taking 1d10 damage). PCs who fall find themselves in the bottom of a shallow pit. It takes a DC 15 Athletics check to climb back to the surface.

The kruthiks automatically sense the weak ground with tremorsense, so they don't fall in. An observant PC (DC 10 Insight) might notice that they sometimes take circuitous paths for no reason.



4 Kruthik Hatchlings — **Level 2 Minion**
Small natural beast (reptile) — XP 31 each

Initiative +3 — **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 2 damage.
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.
Alignment Unaligned — **Languages** –
Str 13 (+1) — **Dex** 16 (+3) — **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 13 (+1) — **Int** 4 (-3) — **Cha** 6 (-2)

Kruthik Nest: To the west is a pile of rocks that hides the nest where the kruthik hatchlings live. The hatchlings don't join the fight unless a PC takes cover in the rocks within 4 squares of their nest.

Steep Slopes: The slopes on either side of the path are considered difficult ground for creatures moving uphill, but not for moving downhill.

Wandering in the Wilderness

It's a brisk walk of 8 hours between Brindol and Rivenroar, so many groups will choose to take extended rests near Rivenroar rather than making the trek back and forth.

If your group prefers to head back to Brindol, and you want to give them a little workout, consider using this optional skill challenge for any or all of the journeys between Brindol and Rivenroar.

Setup: The PCs must use their wilderness lore to avoid hazards and monsters traveling between Brindol and the Rivenroar catacombs.

Level: 1.

XP: 100

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: *Perception, Nature, Endurance.*

Special: After the PCs have made the trip between Brindol and Rivenroar in both directions, they gain a +2 bonus to all checks every time they have to repeat this challenge.

Perception (DC 20): You notice a shortcut. This doesn't directly contribute to a success, but it gives each character in the party a +2 bonus to their next Endurance or Nature check made as part of the challenge. Each character may attempt this check (or assist with another's Perception check) only once, and unsuccessful checks don't count as a failure toward the skill challenge.

Nature (DC 12): You stay on course and avoid local hazards common to the mountain (maximum three successes). If this check is failed twice during the same challenge, the group gets sufficiently lost that they each lose one healing surge trying to walk back to the trail and 1 hour is added to the duration of the trek. Up to two characters can assist this check.

Endurance (DC 10): Every character must roll one Endurance check to avoid the rigors of wilderness travel such as exposure to the elements and mundane woes such as twisted ankles and exhaustion. Each successful check counts as a success toward the skill challenge (maximum three successes;). If no characters succeed, each member of the group loses one healing surge, in addition to counting as a failure for the challenge, and everyone must reroll the Endurance check. Each character may assist only one other character on an Endurance check made as part of this challenge.

Success: The PCs reach Brindol or Rivenroar without incident after 8 hours of travel.

Failure: Roll on the table below and begin a combat encounter with the indicated monsters. After dealing with the monster, the PCs must start the challenge over again to reach their intended destination.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Monsters
01-10	2 adult kruthiks, 2 young kruthiks
11-20	3 fey panthers
21-30	3 rage drakes
31-40	1 vine horror, 3 stirges
41-50	3 dire wolves
51-60	3 deathjump spiders
61-70	5 hyenas
71-80	1 cave bear
81-90	2 dire boars
91-100	3 hippogriffs

Rivenroar

Sinruth wants to raise an army and carve out a fiefdom of his own, but to do so, he knew that he needed a place for his command center, so he went looking for one. When they found the catacombs of Castle Rivenroar, Sinruth decided that they could serve as a starting point—and perhaps expand as needed later. So, he set to work clearing it out and making alliances when he found a need for them.

The castle itself and its catacombs housed the Rivenroar family (living and deceased) long ago. Some other local families of note used the catacombs as a place of interment as well. These families and the Rivenroars had more than one thing in common, but now only those who know what they're looking at as they journey through the catacombs can figure it out: a reverence for Vecna. Now the castle and the catacombs house a much different set of inhabitants than those who built it long ago might have envisioned.

Common Dungeon Elements

The Rivenroar catacombs were constructed over the course of only about a decade, so its architecture is remarkably consistent.

Doors: None of the doors lock, though all have simple sliding latches accessible on both sides. They exist merely for the privacy of those visiting their ancestors—the countermeasures against grave robbers (such as the magma claws, the evistro, and at least some of the undead) are more lethal. The doors swing in both directions, and they baffle sound better than most doors. All DCs for listening through a door (described on page 37 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) are 5 higher than they'd otherwise be.

Floors: The floors are made of flagstone—slightly slippery because the catacombs are damp, but not dangerous.

Ceilings: Thick wooden beams hold up the ceilings. Most are 10 feet off the ground at the walls and 15 feet high at the center of the room.

Sarcophagi: Many of the rooms have stone sarcophagi. Most have a family name engraved on them and year of death that indicates they were buried about 300 years ago. Some have a likeness of the deceased carved into the lid, while others have abstract designs. The skeleton inside each sarcophagus is moldy due to the damp, and most burial garb has long since rotted away. It takes a successful DC 20 Strength check to pry the lid off a sarcophagus. Up to two PCs can usefully aid the PC making the attempt.

Alcoves: Niches in the walls are another common burial technique here in the catacombs. The skeletons are in the same bad condition as the ones in the sarcophagus. Each alcove goes 2 to 3 feet into the wall. Sometimes a section of wall has three alcoves (high, middle, and low).

Stairs: All stairs are difficult terrain. Other than the iron spiral staircase between rooms 8 and 9, all the stairs are made of flagstone.

Rivenroar Overview

The catacombs now host Sinruth's crew, and they haven't taken much care with their treatment of things during their occupation. With the addition of the prisoners, some of the areas serve as a sort of jail.

1. Chamber of Flame Unbound

Room 1: Bound iron doors open into other areas of the catacombs here, and four defenders stand guard.

Tactical Encounter: "Chamber of Flame Unbound" (page 25).

2. Goblin Warren

Rooms 2 and 3: The first room here serves as the hobgoblins' living quarters, and the hallway provides access to most of the level. Seven creatures are in this area.

Tactical Encounter: "Goblin Warren" (page 26).

3. Portal Room

Room 4: The portal in this room sometimes allows creatures to come through it—but it is only a one-way portal. An ochre jelly and two specters are in this room.

Tactical Encounter: "Portal Room" (page 28).

4. Von Urstadt Crypt

Rooms 5 and 6: The crypt contains alcoves holding deceased members of the Von Urstadt clan, plus a few more surprises, which include two magma claws and two gnomes. *Prisoner:* Sertanian.

Tactical Encounter: "Von Urstadt Crypt" (page 29).

5. Spiderweb Landing

Room 7: Ettercaps lurk in this room. *Prisoner:* The body of Kartenis is here.

Tactical Encounter: "Spiderweb Landing" (page 30).

6. Rivenroar Family Crypt

Rooms 8 and 9: While hobgoblins live in the first room (along with a guard drake), altars, sarcophagi, and inscriptions are among the features of the room below it.

Tactical Encounter: "Rivenroar Family Crypt" (page 31).

7. Fresco Chamber

Room 10: This single room features some dire rats and gnomes. The statues are of displacer beasts. *Prisoner:* Mirtala. Mirtala is near catatonic, and requires special attention to bring around (see the sidebar).

Tactical Encounter: "Fresco Chamber" (page 33).

8. Mushroom Chamber

Rooms 11 and 12: Various mushrooms grow within the room, which is defended by two rage drakes.
Prisoner: Zerriksa.

Tactical Encounter: "Mushroom Chamber" (page 34).

9. Von Jallach Crypt

Rooms 13 and 14: A floor trap and some swarms are the more obvious features of the first room. Runes decorate the latter room. Two needlefang drakes and a gnome hold this room. *Prisoner:* Adronsius.

Tactical Encounter: "Von Jallach Crypt" (page 35).

10. Von Adrez-Kauthin Crypt

Rooms 15 and 16: Hobgoblins guard the first room, which ascends to the next one. Within it are one goblin and two spitting drakes. *Prisoner:* Jalissa.

Tactical Encounter: "Von Adrez-Kauthin Crypt" (page 37).

Getting Mirtala to Talk

It takes significant effort to convince Mirtala to tell the PCs what she knows—or anything, for that matter.

Level: 1.

XP: 100

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: *Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Insight.*

Bluff (DC 15): You trick Mirtala into believing that she knows you from back in Brindol. The PCs can earn only one success this way.

Diplomacy (DC 15): You coax Mirtala to come out of her shell, convincing her that she's now safe.

Insight (DC 10): You might realize that Mirtala has some had some sort of severe mental trauma. This grants a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made during the challenge. The PCs can earn only one success this way.

Intimidate (DC 15): You threaten Mirtala (directly or indirectly) with consequences for being uncooperative. A failure closes off this approach and applies a -2 penalty to other checks made for the duration of the challenge.

Success: Mirtala tells the PCs what she knows, as described on page 33.

Failure: Mirtala meekly follows the PCs around but doesn't say anything.

11. Honor Guard Crypt

Rooms 17, 18, and 19: Alcoves fill one room, while a fountain that serves as a scrying pool is in the other- with the boy prisoner Thurann. The third room has a sunburst mosaic within it. Two ghouls and two zombies move throughout these rooms. *Prisoner:* Thurann.

Tactical Encounter: "Honor Guard Crypt" (page 39).

12. Sinruth's Abode

Rooms 20 and 21: Sinruth is in one of these two rooms, which also features menhirs in the first room and a sarcophagus in the second. The dragoncrest helm and the gauntlets are in this room along with Sinruth.

Tactical Encounter: "Sinruth's Abode" (page 41).

13. Crypt Guardian Chamber

Room 22: A square prison in this room holds an evistro, and some wererats are also within this room.

Tactical Encounter: "Crypt Guardian Chamber" (page 42).

14. Shrine of the Obelisk

Room 23: This shrine has lines of pews facing a rune-encrusted obelisk at the northern end of the room. A gnome and some wererats watch this room for intruders. The PCs can find the longsword, three shields, and the battle standard in this room.

Tactical Encounter: "Shrine of the Obelisk" (page 43).

15. Lords of Rivenroar Audience Chamber

Room 24: Two thrones stand along the north wall of the chamber, and one contains a fleshy corpse, while the other has a skeleton. Skeletons and a wight start battle with PCs here.

SESSION DATE	CHARS PRESENT	ENC 1 XP	ENC 2 XP	ENC 3 XP	ENC 4 XP	ENC 5 XP	ENC 6 XP	TREASURE FOUND

Tactical Encounter: "Lords of Rivenroar Audience Chamber" (page 44).

Conclusion

When the captives have been freed and the antiques recovered, the PCs can make a final trip back to Rivenroar and claim their reward. Unless most of the prisoners perished, the town is delighted with the PCs' success, and they throw a great feast in the repaired Hall of Great Valor to honor them. With great ceremony, each of the antiques is restored to its place on the mantles and walls of the great hall.

But Sinruth's letter should give the PCs pause. Clearly something beyond a single band of hobgoblins with delusions of grandeur is out there. And the presence of powerful necromantic magic indicates that Rivenroar Castle might have had a secret history of its own. Such matters are beyond the scope of this adventure, but they are fertile ground for future exploits of the heroes of "Rescue at Rivenroar."

XP and Treasure Tracker

Use the chart above to keep track of your progress through "Rescue at Rivenroar." Doing so can help you keep track of milestones/action points and the rewards (XP and treasure) you've handed out. Shade in the XP box if the PCs took an extended rest afterward; that way you'll know when to award action points.

Chamber of Flame Unbound

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

Setup

This is a fairly straightforward battle.

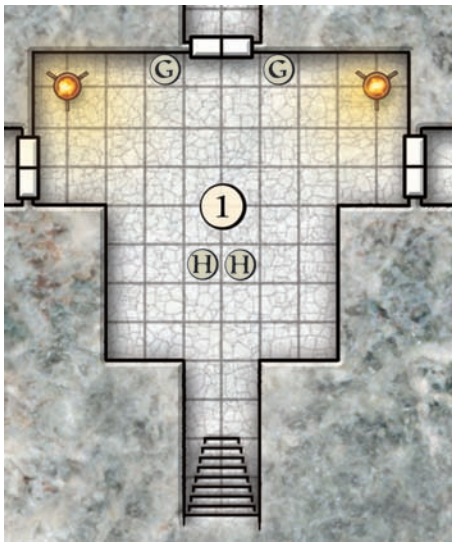
2 hobgoblin soldiers (H)
2 goblin sharpshooters (G)

When the PCs descend into the catacomb, read:

Two flail-wielding hobgoblins stand ready in the center of this dank chamber. Braziers flank double doors on the north wall. Two goblins with crossbows stand in front of that door.

If the characters have a passive Perception score of 15 or higher, read:

You can make out faint grooves in the floor that begin underneath the braziers and extend to the south wall.



Tactics

The hobgoblins screen the sharpshooters. One of the sharpshooters spends a minor action to open one of the center doors to set the braziers in motion. All the monsters know how to avoid the gouts of flame.

If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, a goblinoid flees through the nearest exit, putting the next room on alert and joining its denizens for the rest of the day.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The braziers provide bright light for 10 squares.

Braziers: When any of the doors in this chamber are open, the braziers start to move north and south on grooves in the floor. They move at initiative point 10, and they shoot a gout of flame from one brazier to the other at initiative point 0. The fire is not a trap, per se. It was intended more to be impressive to family members paying their respects.

At initiative 10, move each of the braziers south 1 square. If a creature is in the way, the brazier makes an attack at +5 vs. Fortitude. If the brazier hits, it pushes the creature 1 square. If it misses, neither brazier moves that turn. When the braziers reach the wall, start moving them 1 square north each turn.

At initiative point 0, the braziers send a gout of flame from one to the other, alternating between right and left. The brazier makes an attack (+5 vs. Reflex) against each creature in the path. If the brazier hits, it deals 1d6 fire damage.

Doors: These bound iron doors have latches, but no locks. The west doors have a plaque on it that says "To Von Urstadt." The north doors say "To Rivenroar Family." The east doors say "To Von Jallach."

2 Goblin Sharpshooters (G) — **Level 2 Artillery**
Small natural humanoid (goblin) — XP 125 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11
Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

Sniper
When a goblin sharpshooter makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.

Combat Advantage
The goblin sharpshooter deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 8 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow with 20 bolts

2 Hobgoblin Soldiers (H) — **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 150 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 5

Flail (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.

Formation Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin soldier rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +10, History +8
Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail

Goblin Warren

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Setup

Room 2 serves as basic living quarters for the hobgoblins, and room 3 is the central hallway that provides access to most of this level.

1 hobgoblin soldier (H)
2 goblin sharpshooters (G)
4 hobgoblin grunts (R)

The hobgoblins start in a cluster in room 2, and the goblins are in area 3.

When the PCs reach the southern doorway, read:

This L-shaped room has doors in the north and west walls. A group of angry hobgoblins is near the middle of the room. Around the periphery of the room are bedrolls, sacks, and a roasting rack near the brazier.

A narrow fissure in the ceiling carries the smoke from the brazier away.

When the PCs reach area 3, read:

A hallway stretches north into the darkness. A jagged hole in the floor runs the width of the passageway about 10 feet ahead. Two ropes hang from the ceiling and extend down into the pit.

Tactics

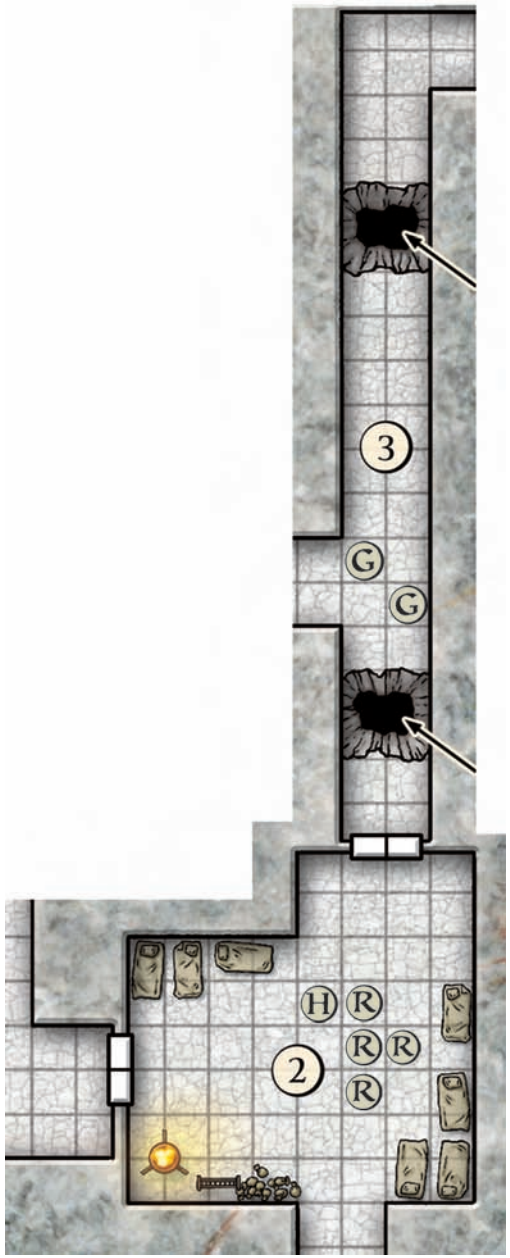
The hobgoblins try to use superior numbers to envelop the PCs. The goblins join the fray, rolling initiative prior to the start of the second round.

The hobgoblins fight until slain, but goblins reduced to 10 hit points or fewer flee north through room 3 and put rooms 8 and 9 on alert for 10 minutes. Goblin sharpshooters leap or use ropes to move across pits in room 3.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The brazier in room 2 provides bright light for 10 squares. Room 3 has only whatever light the PCs bring with them.

Pits: It's a 20-foot fall (and 2d10 damage) into room 11. Creatures can clear the pit with a successful DC 10 Athletics check (DC 20 if they don't have a running start) or a DC 12 Acrobatics check (to swing across on the rope). The goblins try the DC 10 Athletics check (at +3) if they have a running start and the DC 12 Acrobatics check (at +5) if they don't.



4 Hobgoblin Grunts (R) **Level 3 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 38 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin grunt suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin grunt rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin grunt gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +6, History +2
Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+1)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 9 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, light shield, longsword

2 Goblin Sharpshooter (G) **Level 2 Artillery**
Small natural humanoid (goblin) XP 125 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11
Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

Sniper
When a goblin sharpshooter makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.

Combat Advantage
The goblin sharpshooter deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 8 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow with 20 bolts

Hobgoblin Soldier (H) **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Speed 5

Flail (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.

Formation Strike (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin soldier rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +10, History +8
Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail

Portal Room

Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

Setup

This room is the destination of a one-way portal from another castle from a bygone age—and monsters sometimes come through the portal.

1 ochre jelly (O)
2 specters

The encounter doesn't start until the PCs pause for more than a few seconds to examine the image of the castle.

When the PCs enter the chamber, read:

A picture in the middle of this room shows flickering images of a sinister castle in the middle of a swamp.

If the PCs examine the picture for more than 1 round, read:

A slimy creature slithers through the image and roils toward you.

Tactics

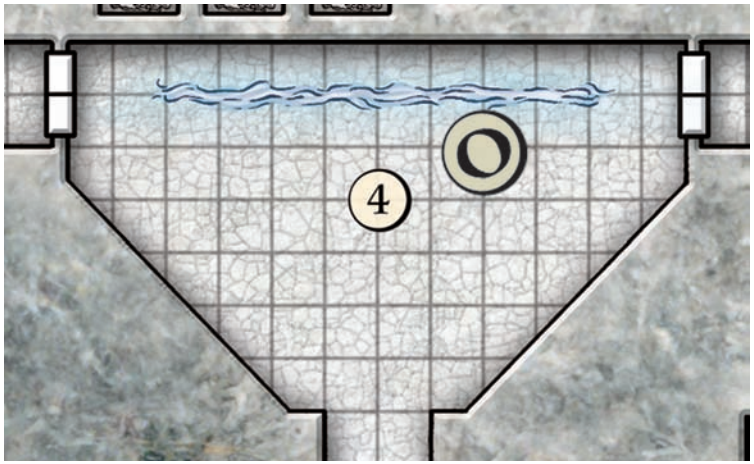
The ochre jelly comes through the portal if it detects someone studying the image (the hobgoblins have learned the hard way to rush through this room). The specters, mere opportunists who aren't affiliated with the ochre jelly, roll for initiative before the start of the third round. They attack from the rear.

All these creatures fight until slain, but they don't pursue PCs beyond this room. Another ochre jelly spawns from the picture portal provided at least an hour has passed and provided the last ochre jelly to come through is dead.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The portal itself glows, providing bright light within 5 squares.

Portal: The portal, once a connection to another faraway castle allied with Rivenroar, crackles whenever the image flickers away. It's a phantasm and can be walked through as if it wasn't there. But it's a one-way portal from somewhere, as the PCs learn when an ochre jelly slithers through.



Ochre Jelly (O) — **Level 3 Elite Brute**
Large natural beast (blind, ooze) — XP 300

Initiative +0 **Senses** Perception +2; blindsight 10, tremorsense 10
HP 102; **Bloodied** 51 see also *split* below
AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14
Immune gaze; **Resist** 5 acid
Saving Throws +2
Speed 4; see also *flowing form*
Action Points 1

Slam (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
+8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Flowing Form (move; at-will)
The ochre jelly shifts 4 squares.

Split (when first bloodied; encounter)
The ochre jelly splits into two, each with hit points equal one-half its current hit points. Effects applied to the original ochre jelly do not apply to the second one. An ochre jelly can't split if it is reduced to 0 hit points by the attack that bloodied it. Left alone, the two halves of the ochre jelly recombine into a single creature at the end of the encounter.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 8 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 11 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 1 (-4)

2 Specters — **Level 4 Lurker**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 175 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
Spectral Chill (**Cold**) aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage.

Spectral Barrage (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Illusion, Psychic**
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Invisibility (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +9
Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Von Urstadt Crypt

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

Setup

The gnomes working for Sinruth have figured out that leaving the doors between rooms 5 and 6 open for more than a few seconds summons two magma claws, presumably to destroy tomb robbers.

2 magma claws
2 gnome skulks (G)

The encounter starts when one of the gnomes summons the magma claws.

When the PCs reach the middle of the room, read:

One of the north doors swings open. Nothing comes through the doors, but after a few tense seconds, two fiery creatures appear, making the room uncomfortably hot—and dangerous.

Tactics

One gnome hides near the north doors and waits for intruders to approach before summoning the magma claws. Then, once the PCs are engaged, the gnomes sneak behind them to strike at a vulnerable PC.

The magma claws fight until slain, but they don't leave room 5. If the gnomes fall below 10 hit points, they try to make it to their allies, the ettercaps in room 7.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The only illumination is from the magma claws, which emit bright light for 10 squares.

Jail Cells: A DC 15 Thievery check can pick the lock, or the PCs can take the key from one of the skulks.

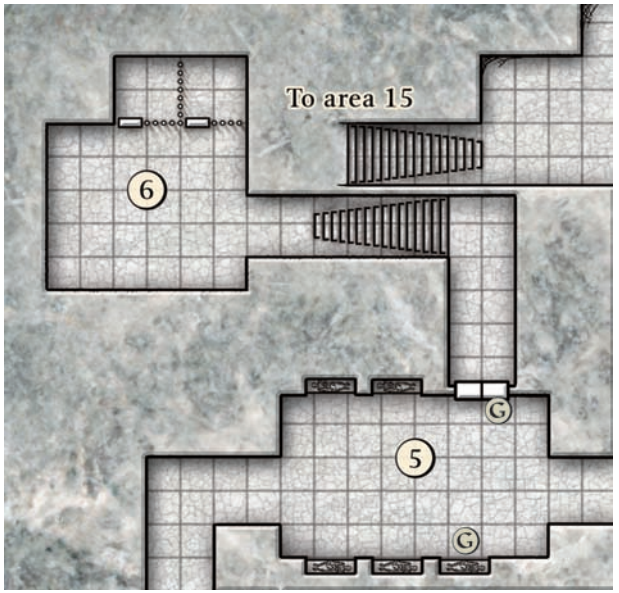
Alcoves: Alcoves on the north and south walls hold the skeletons of the Von Urstadt clan, once prominent in the region (DC 15 History). An inscription along the east wall says "Hail Von Urstadts! Ascend with Glory!" and a dust-covered fresco on the west wall depicts human knights riding pegasi into the clouds.

Some of the bodies in the alcoves were buried with treasure. It takes 20 minutes (divided by the number of searchers) to find treasure parcels A and B.

Prisoner: Sertanian, the castellan of the Great Hall of Valor, is kept in one of the jail cells. Sertanian is described on page 7. He knows what all the treasures from the Great Hall look like, and he knows that Mirtala is held downstairs near a spiral staircase.

2 Gnome Skulks (G)		**Level 2 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid		XP 125 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17		
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12		
Speed 5		
(+) **War Pick** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).		
Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.		
Combat Advantage		
The gnome skulk deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) ✦ **Illusion**		
The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.		
Reactive Stealth		
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.		
Shadow Skulk		
When a gnome skulk makes a melee or a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Elven	
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9		
Str 8 (+0)	**Dex** 17 (+4)	**Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	**Int** 14 (+3)	**Cha** 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts		

North Doors in Room 5: These doors summon the magma claws if left open for more than a few seconds. Once magma claws have been summoned, they remain for 1 day. The doors don't summon magma claws more frequently than that in any case.



2 Magma Claws		**Level 4 Brute**
Medium elemental magical beast (earth, fire)		XP 175 each
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +7	
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32		
AC 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13		
Immune petrification; **Resist** 10 fire; **Vulnerable** cold (slowed until the end of the magma claw's next turn)		
Speed 4 (8 while charging)		
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage plus 1d6 fire damage.		
Spew Lava (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**		
+5 vs. Reflex; the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage and is immobilized (save ends both).		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Primordial	
Skills Endurance +9, Stealth +8		
Str 18 (+6)	**Dex** 12 (+3)	**Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 2 (-2)	**Cha** 6 (+0)

Spiderweb Landing

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

Setup

This room features some difficult terrain—and a potentially tragic situation if the PCs have prisoners with them when they discover the body of Kartenix the guard captain.

2 ettercap fang guards (G)
1 ettercap webspinner (W)

The webspinner is in the northwest corner of the room and the fang guards are near the middle.

When the PCs reach a point where they can see into the room, read:

This landing is covered with spiderwebs, and the floor under your feet is sticky. A trio of ettercaps shuffles around the room ahead of you, which has passages heading up and to the west, down and to the south, and north turning east.

Tactics

The webspinner tries to immobilize or restrain as many PCs as it can with its webs, and then the fang guards concentrate on that target.

The ettercaps fight bravely until two are dead. The sole survivor flees as best it can, unless it thinks it can revenge itself against an adjacent bloodied PC.

Features of the Area

Illumination: None beyond what the PCs bring with them.

Spiderwebs: About half the squares in the room are covered with spiderwebs (difficult terrain for creatures that aren't ettercaps). A character who enters a spiderweb square must make a successful DC 10 Athletics or Acrobatics check or become immobilized until the creature succeeds on the escape action. Spiderweb squares also provide concealment.

Corpse: Kartenix's corpse is webbed to the wall in the southeast corner, his face a rictus of pain and his eyes bulging.

Silk Bag: A bag in the southeast corner contains treasure parcel C and 100 gp in residuum.

2 Ettercap Fang Guards (G) **Level 4 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (spider) XP 175 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 56; **Bloodied** 28
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Resist 10 poison
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also *web walker*

Greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).

Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Requires combat advantage; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If the attack hits, the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of the ettercap's next turn and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Web Tangle (standard; at-will)
+7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Web Reaper
The ettercap fang guard gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 2 damage against restrained and immobilized creatures.

Web Walker
An ettercap ignores movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 11 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe

Ettercap Webspinner (W) **Level 5 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (spider) XP 200

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32
AC 18; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Resist 10 poison
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also *web walker*

Longspear (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2, +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.

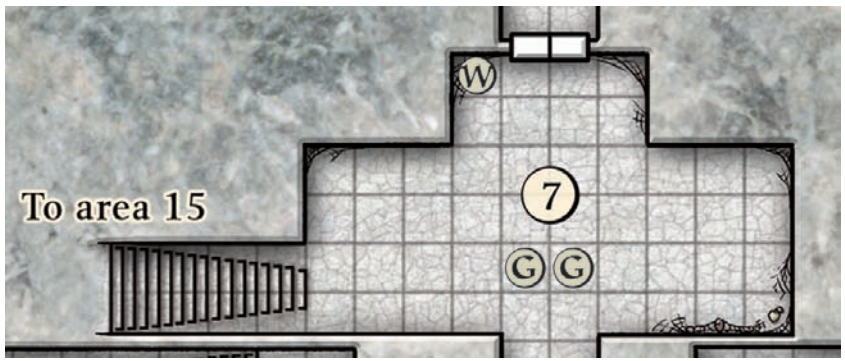
Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +8 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5poison damage (save ends).

Web Net (minor 1/round; at-will)
Ranged 5; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).

Webbed Terrain (standard; recharge ⚄) ✦ **Zone**
Area burst 2 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is filled with spider webs and is considered difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Web Walker
An ettercap ignores movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 13 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, longspear



Rivenroar Family Crypt

Encounter Level 1 (525 XP)

Setup

Some of the hobgoblins live in room 8, and room 9 below it is a major crypt. Either way, the PCs face a two-stage fight when the two rooms reinforce each other.

1 hobgoblin archer (A)
4 hobgoblin grunts (R)
1 hobgoblin soldier (H)
1 guard drake (D)

The hobgoblin soldier and guard drake start in room 8, and the grunts and archers start in room 9.

If the PCs enter room 8, read:

Furs and bedrolls cover the floor, with sacks and rucksacks leaned against the walls. A hobgoblin stands with a guard drake at his side. A spiral staircase of wrought iron descends from an alcove in the north.

If the PCs enter room 9, read:

Five hobgoblins stand amid four stone sarcophagi in this chamber. A side chamber to the east has two marble altars. A spiral staircase made of wrought iron ascends from an alcove to the north. And there's a hole in the floor in the northeast corner.

Tactics

It takes two turns for any of the hobgoblins or the drake to make it all the way up or down the staircase, so no matter which room the PCs enter first, they have to contend with reinforcements in the third round.

The drake fights until slain, but the hobgoblins flee if they're reduced to 10 hit points or fewer and are outnumbered by PCs. They flee toward the entrance through room 3 if they can reach it or through rooms 7, 5, 4, and 2 if the PCs have cut off that escape route.

The hobgoblins have lived with that garbage pit for so long that they've almost forgotten it's there. They aren't smart enough to stay away from the edge during a fight.

Features of the Area

Illumination: There's a lantern (10 squares bright light) at the northwest corner of room 9. That's enough to illuminate the squares adjacent to the staircase in room 8; that room is otherwise dark. The altars have candles (2 squares dim light) on them.

Altars: The altars are devoted to Bane (Religion DC 10). But astute observers (Religion DC 15) notice that they weren't always so—they're originally altars to Vecna that the hobgoblins have "rededicated."

Sarcophagi: The northernmost two sarcophagi hold treasure parcels D, E, and F. They aren't locked or trapped, but it takes a DC 20 Strength check to move the heavy stone lids off the sarcophagi.

Spiral Staircase: The staircase connects rooms 8 and 9 and takes 12 squares to ascend or descend 20 feet. It's difficult terrain.

4 Hobgoblin Grunts (R) **Level 3 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 38 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin grunt suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin grunt rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin grunt gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +6, History +2
Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+1)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 9 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, light shield, longsword

Hobgoblin Archer (A) **Level 3 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

Longbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin archer grants an ally within 5 squares of it a +2 bonus to its next ranged attack roll against the same target.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin archer suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin archer rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +5, History +6
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

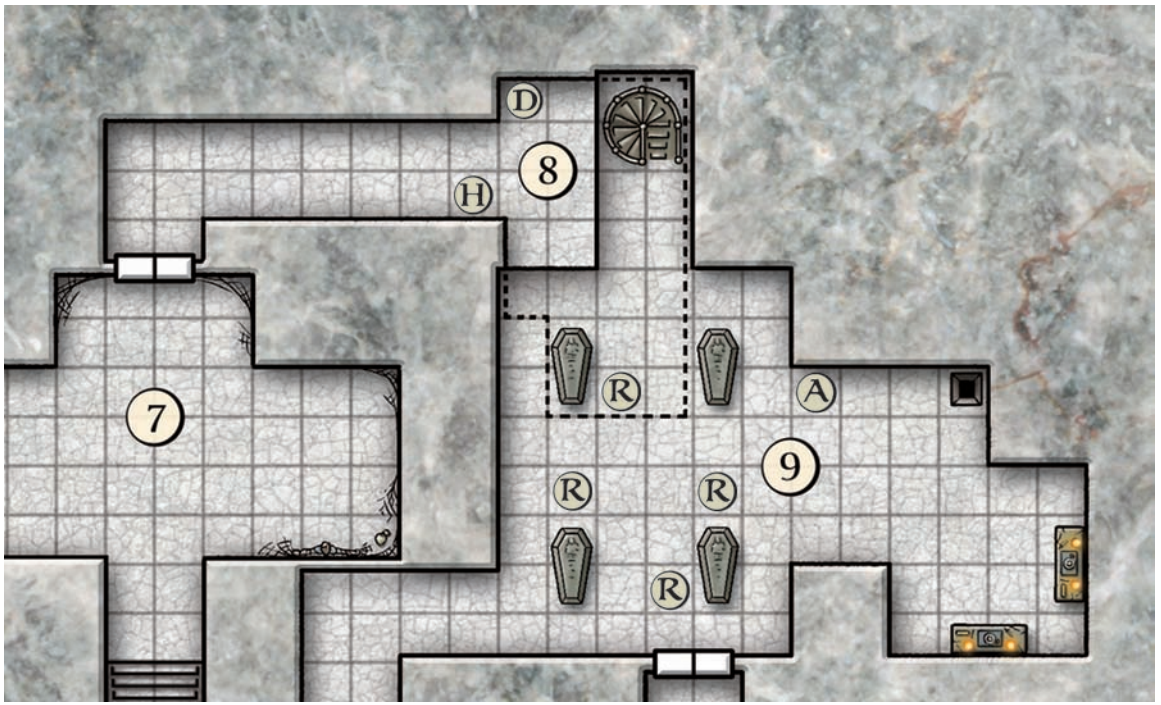
Hobgoblin Soldier (H)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23	
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18,	
Reflex 16, **Will** 16	
Speed 5	
⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.	
⊕ **Formation Strike** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)	
The hobgoblin soldier rolls a saving throw against the effect.	
Phalanx Soldier	
The hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +10, History +8	
Str 19 (+5)	**Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail	

Guard Drake (D)	Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +7
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24	
AC 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12	
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 16 (+4)	**Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	**Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 12 (+2)

Living Quarters: It takes one person about 20 minutes to look through the sacks in room 9—and it's just ragged goblin clothing and primitive tools, worthless back in civilization.

Pit: The goblins throw all their garbage down this 40-foot-deep pit. The stench that wafts out of the pit makes that obvious.

Wall Inscription: Running around the walls near the ceiling is the following message, repeated every 10 feet or so: "Here lie the Rivenroars until the Day of the Black Sun. If you seek their monument, look at the lands around you."



Fresco Chamber

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

Setup

This encounter includes a straightforward fight with rats and gnomes, then a roleplaying opportunity as the PCs must contend with a shell-shocked prisoner.

3 dire rats (R)
2 gnome skulks (G)

When the PCs round the corner and can see into this room, read:

Four statues of displacer beasts, their eyes glowing amber, stare at you. Beyond them is a candlelit altar. Tied to the front of it is a human female, her eyes wild with terror.

Tactics

The gnome skulks stay hidden in the shadows until the battle falls into a stable position, then they sidle around to the party's rear and attack vulnerable PCs. The rats bite whatever's nearest.

The rats fight until slain, but then gnomes try to hide and flee if reduced below 10 hit points.

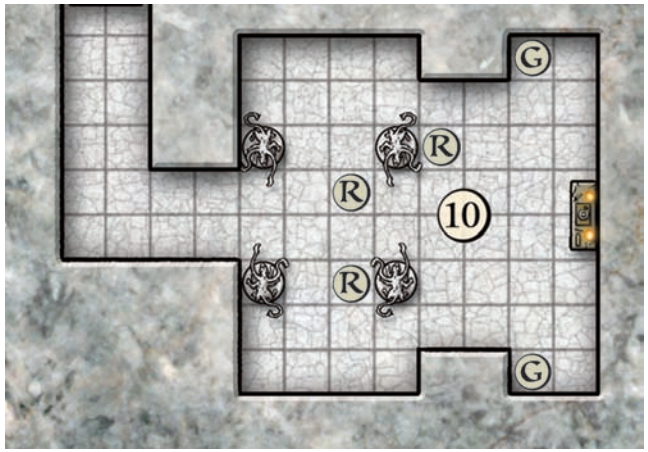
Features of the Area

Illumination: The candles on the altar emit dim light for 2 squares, and the eyes of each displacer beast statue likewise provide dim light in squares adjacent to a statue.

Displacer Beast Statues: Each displacer beast statue has glowing eyes but are otherwise ordinary statues.

2 Gnome Skulks (G)	**Level 2 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid	XP 125 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	
Speed 5	
⊕ **War Pick** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).	
➴ **Hand Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The gnome skulk deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) ✦ **Illusion**	
The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Reactive Stealth	
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.	
Shadow Skulk	
When a gnome skulk makes a melee or a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9	
Str 8 (+0)	**Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	**Int** 14 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts	

Filth Fever	**Level 3 Disease**
The target is cured.	**Initial Effect** The target loses 1 healing surge.
The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense.	**Final Effect:** The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense. The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points.



3 Dire Rats (R)	**Level 1 Brute**
Medium natural beast	XP 100 each
Initiative +2	**Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19	
AC 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11	
Immune filth fever (see below)	
Speed 6, climb 3	
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Disease**	
+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target contracts filth fever (see below).	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Skills Stealth +7	
Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 18 (+4)	**Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-2)

Altar: With a large marble raven atop it, it doesn't take a Religion check to figure out that this altar is devoted to the Raven Queen.

Prisoner: Mirtala the cook has been tied to the altar and menaced by the rats for days. She's caught filth fever from them, and she's frightened to the point of catatonia. See the sidebar on page 23 for information on dealing with Mirtala. She follows obvious rescuers around, but she doesn't talk unless PCs succeed at breaking through her mental trauma. She has a clue where Adronsius and Sertanian are being held.

Mushroom Chamber

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Setup

The PCs must contend not only with rage drakes, but a number of toxic mushrooms.

2 rage drakes (D)

The rage drakes have a passive Perception of 13.

When the PCs can see into room 11, read:

This room, filled with all sorts of architectural debris, has a wet, musty smell. Amid the ruins are all sorts of mushrooms, mostly with brown or gray caps.

When the PCs round the corner into room 12, read:

You see an old woman within a glowing magic circle. You can hear her muffled voice: "Get me out of here!"

Tactics

The rage drakes lurk out of sight behind chunks of rubble until the PCs run afoul of the mushrooms, when they rush in. The rage drakes are affected by the spores, but they're cunning enough to know that certain mushrooms are to be avoided. The drakes fight until slain, but they won't leave room 11.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Phosphorescent fungi cover the walls and ceiling, bathing the chamber in dim light.

Magic Circle: Zerriksa is trapped in this circle in room 12. Anyone pressing against the invisible barrier along the perimeter of the circle takes 1d10 damage per round, and deals half as much damage to a creature inside. Disrupting the circle requires a successful DC 20 Thievery, Arcana, and/or Perception (no retries) to notice that the circle sometimes flickers out of existence for a split-second. If the circle is vacant, then there's no barrier and anyone can walk (or be pushed) in. At that point the barrier reappears and the trap resets.

Shafts: It's a 20-foot climb (Athletics DC 20 up the wall or DC 5 up the slippery rope) to reach room 3.

Mushrooms: Some squares have toxic mushrooms in them, in one of the varieties below. Roll 1d4 when a PC enters one of these patches to determine the variety. All mushroom squares are difficult terrain. PCs can figure out what the mushrooms do with a DC 15 Dungeoneering check ahead of time or after the fact by observing what color of mushroom had what effect. Once identified, a DC 15 Acrobatics or Dungeoneering check allows a PC to enter a square of mushrooms without disturbing it.

Cloudspores: Described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 67), cloudspores are brown. If a PC distrubs a cloudspore, it emits a cloud of spores that provides concealment in that square for 5 minutes.

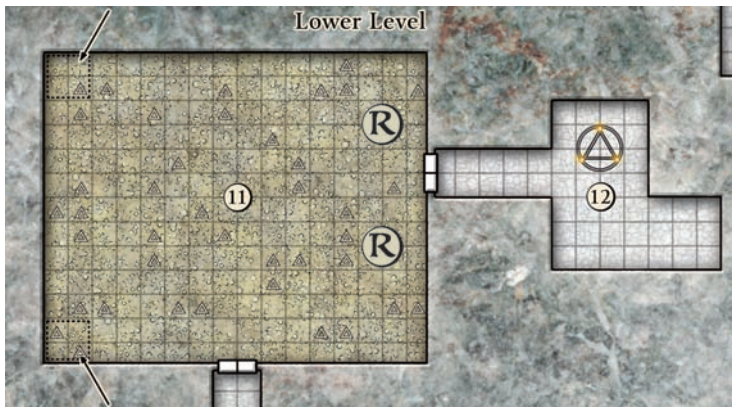
Shrieker Mushrooms: The white mushrooms shriek when someone steps adjacent to or in their square.

Doomspores: These gray mushrooms, described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 88), make a +6 attack against Fortitude if a PC steps into their square, dealing 1d10 poison damage and ongoing 5 poison (save ends).

Slumberspores: These red-capped mushrooms, when disturbed, make a +6 attack against the Will of whoever disturbed them and all adjacent creatures. On a hit, a creature is slowed (save ends). If that creature fails its first saving throw, it becomes unconscious (save ends).

Prisoner: Zerriksa the crone is within a magic circle in room 12. She's described on page 8. To rescue her, the PCs must somehow deal with the magic circle. She's the only one who knows for sure that Kartenix is dead and in the clutches of the ettercaps. If rescued, the PCs have to put up with her criticism and complaints until they return her to Brindol. She's too grumpy to be grateful.

2 Rage Drakes (D)		**Level 5 Brute**
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 200 each
Initiative +3	**Senses** Perception +3	
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38; see also *bloodied rage*		
AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15		
Immune fear (while bloodied only)		
Speed 8		
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage; see also *bloodied rage*.		
⚕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage; see also *bloodied rage*.		
⚕ **Raking Charge** (standard; at-will)		
When the rage drake charges, it makes two claw attacks against a single target.		
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)		
The rage drake gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage per attack.		
Raging Mount (while bloodied and mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**		
The rage drake grants its rider a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with melee attacks.		
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –	
Str 19 (+6)	**Dex** 13 (+3)	**Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 3 (-2)	**Cha** 12 (+3)



Von Jallach Crypt

Encounter Level 1 (525 XP)

Setup

This room features some swarms, an obvious floor trap, and a gnome that reveals himself at an inconvenient time for the PCs.

2 needlefang drake swarms (D)
1 gnome skulk (G)

The needlefangs coalesce into two swarms once the PCs cross the threshold into room 13, coming out from the alcoves around the perimeter of the room.

When the PCs ascend to room 13, read:

A square bounded by glowing runes dominates the floor in this room. The east wall has two doors. The walls are covered with empty alcoves designed to hold dead bodies.

Tactics

The needlefangs overwhelm the first PC or PCs into the room. The needlefangs have learned through painful experience not to touch the runes on the floor. The gnome skulk waits until the needlefang drakes are fighting and the runes glowing to attack.

The gnome flees if reduced to below 10 hit points and if he thinks it can make it to the stairs.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The floor runes in room 13 glow like candles—dim light within 2 squares. Room 14 has only the illumination that the PCs bring with them.

Lintel Inscription: At the top of the stairs leading to room 13, "Von Jallach Family Tomb" is carved above the doorway.

Alcoves: The Von Jallachs never got to use this family crypt—Rivenroar Castle fell before they had a chance. But in the back corners of the alcoves in room 13 are the debris and detritus that the needlefang drakes have gathered into their nests.

Floor Runes: The runes in room 13 pulse with light every few seconds. They deal 2d6 damage to any creature that steps on them, and 1d4 damage to any creature that leaps or flies over them. A DC 10 Arcana check reveals that the runes spell out "Von Jallach" in a phonetic alphabet that wizards sometimes use.

Fountain: The water in room 14 is cool and pure—fed by an intact cistern in the ruins above.

Prisoner: Adronsius the alchemist is chained to the wall in room 14. He's described on page 9. It takes a DC 20 Strength check to pull his shackles out of the wall, a DC 15 Thievery check to pick the lock, or use of the key (in possession of the gnome at the start of the encounter). Adronsius can provide directions to where Jelissa is being held.

Gnome Skulk (G) **Level 2 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid XP 125

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Speed 5

⊕ **War Pick** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).

Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20 +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

Combat Advantage
The gnome skulk deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) **Illusion**
The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.

Reactive Stealth
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.

Shadow Skulk
When a gnome skulk makes a melee or a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9
Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4) **Int** 14 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts

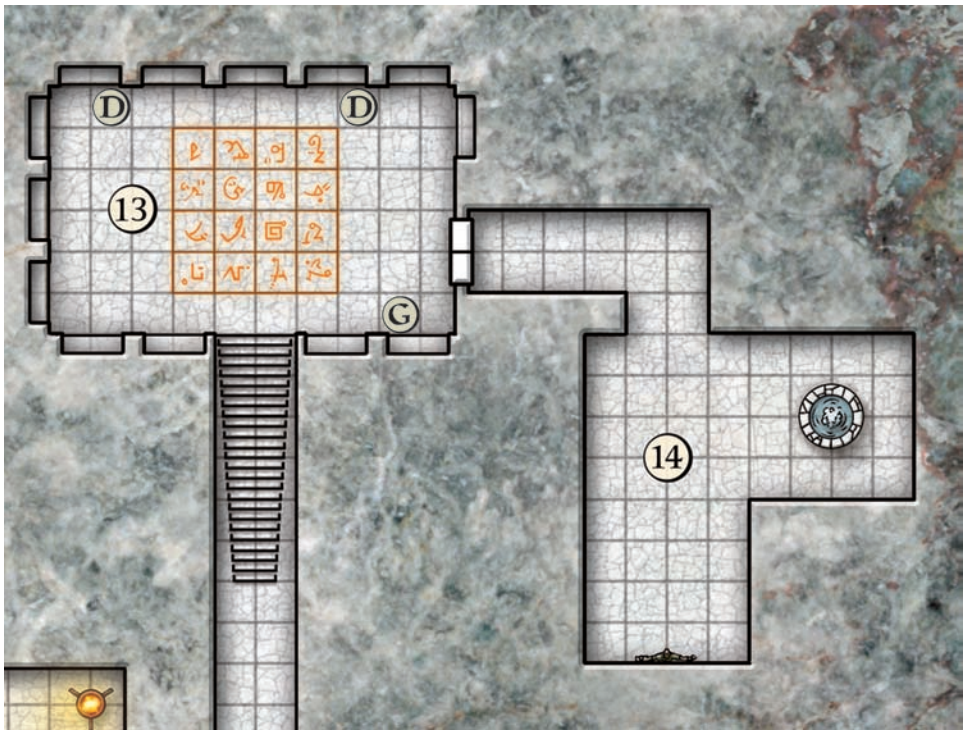
2 Needlefang Drake Swarms (D) **Level 2 Soldier**
Medium natural beast (reptile, swarm) XP 125 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7
Swarm Attack aura 1; the needlefang drake swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 14
Immune fear; **Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** +5 damage from close and area attacks.
Speed 7

⊕ **Swarm of Teeth** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, or 2d10 + 4 damage against a prone target.

Pull Down (minor; at-will)
+ 7 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)



Von Adrez-Kauthin Crypt

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

Setup

This room, the gateway to the upper level, has a fight with a mix of drake artillery and hobgoblin soldiers.

1 goblin hexer (G)
2 spitting drakes (S)
4 hobgoblin grunts (H)

The hobgoblin grunts are in the middle of the room 15, and the spitting drakes are along the western edge of the room. The goblin hexer comes out of room 16 to join the battle at the start of the second round.

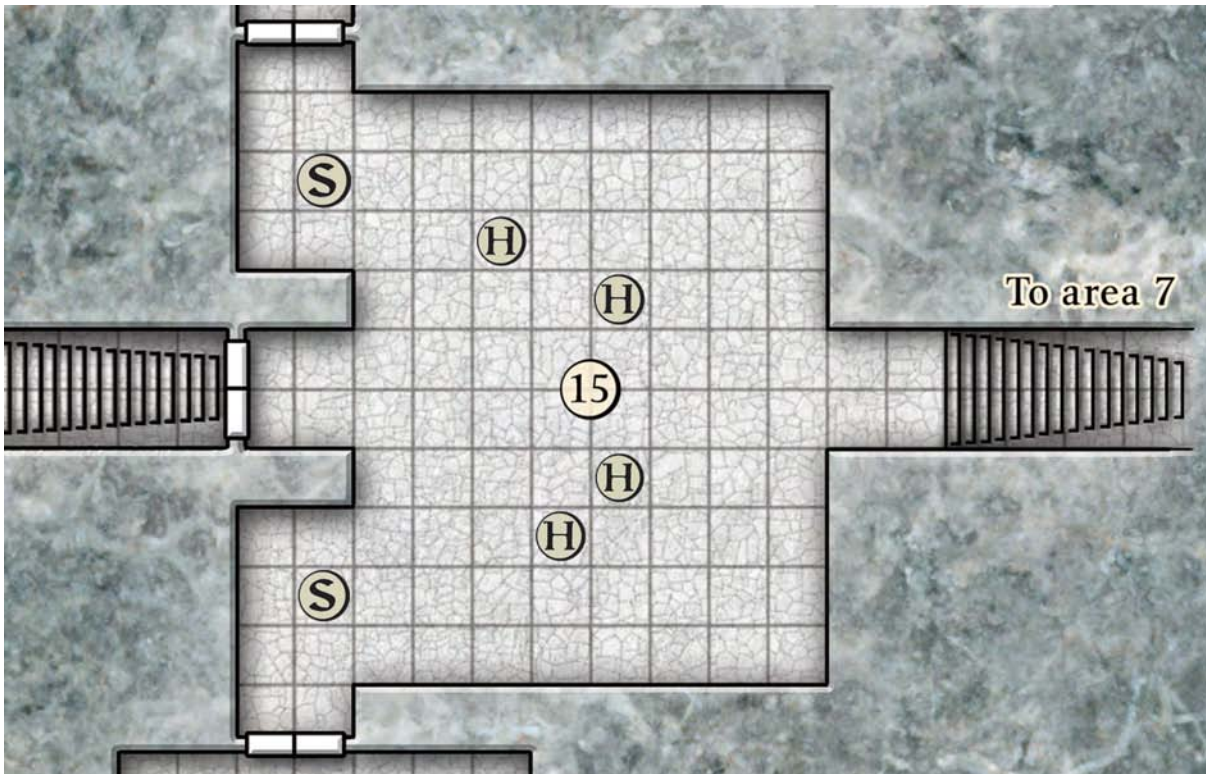
When the PCs ascend the stairs, read:

Carved into the last three steps of the staircase are the words "Von Adrez," "Kauthin," and "Crypt." And once you climb high enough to see into the chamber at the top of the stairs, you see bas-relief images of humans laden with baskets, bags, and boxes—all depicted walking clockwise around the room.

Four hobgoblin guards stand in the middle of the room, and behind them are two spitting drakes.

Tactics

The hobgoblin strategy is straightforward: Move into melee and stay together. Likewise, the spitting drakes try to spit every round. The goblin uses its vexing cloud if the PCs are clustered together. Then it hexes PCs that are maneuvering away from the hobgoblins and uses *incite bravery* if it thinks the hobgoblins are going to die.



The drakes fight until slain. The hobgoblins don't flee unless the hexer flees or falls, at which point they flee for room 21. The hexer flees toward room 21 if it's below 10 hit points.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Braziers in the northeast and southeast corners of room 15 cast bright light for 10 squares. Room 16 has only the lights that PCs bring with them.

Bas-Reliefs: The carvings depict the merchant operations of the Von Adrez-Kauthin family (DC 20 History), once quite prominent in the region.

Low Sarcophagi: Each sarcophagus is set into the floor so that it protrudes only 6 inches or so (not enough to affect movement). It takes a DC 20 Strength check to pull each lid off the sarcophagus. The southwest one has treasure parcels G and H in it.

Prisoner: Shackled to the wall in room 16 is Jalissa, an acolyte of Ioun and one of the Brindol residents the PCs are trying to save. See page 7 for a full description. Jalissa knows that the boy Thurann is somewhere nearby. A DC 20 Strength check is sufficient to yank the shackles from the wall, and a DC 15 Thievery check can pick the lock. Or PCs can do the obvious thing and use the key that the goblin hexer has.

Goblin Hexer (G) **Level 3 Controller (Leader)**
Small natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23
AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16; see also *lead from the rear*
Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

⊕ **Hexer Rod** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.

↗ **Blinding Hex** (standard; at-will)
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

↗ **Stinging Hex** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).

✲ **Vexing Cloud** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Zone**
Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to the goblin hexer and its allies. The goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.

↗ **Incite Bravery** (immediate reaction, when an ally uses *goblin tactics*; at-will)
Range 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 squares and make an attack.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin shifts 1 square.

Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)
The goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of its level or lower.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 18 (+5)
Equipment leather robes, hexer rod

4 Hobgoblin Grunts (H) **Level 1 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 25 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1: a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12
Speed 5

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin grunt gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +6, Stealth +9
Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+1)
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 9 (-1)
Equipment leather armor, light shield, longsword

Spitting Drake (S) **Level 3 Artillery**
Medium natural beast (reptile) XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +3
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14
Resist 10 acid
Speed 7

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

↗ **Caustic Spit** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 4 acid damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 12 (+2)

Honor Guard Crypt

Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

Setup

This encounter could take place in any of the three rooms; the ghouls and zombies walk an endless patrol in the center of the level, and the PCs are bound to run into them eventually.

2 ghouls
2 zombies

Place the monsters at whichever doorway they normally walk through as they follow their patrol (see below).

When the PCs reach the doorway to room 17, read:

This room has alcoves full of skeletal remains along the south wall, plus an annex with a fountain and a tied-up boy to the east.

When the PCs reach the doorway to room 18, read:

A still pool of water dominates this room, which is noticeably more humid than others inside the catacombs. A sheen of water droplets covers the walls.

When the PCs reach the doorway to room 19, read:

The middle of this room has a sunburst mosaic in it. Passageways head west then north, north then east, and due east.

Tactics

The zombies and ghouls travel together. They start in room 19, walk down to room 17 where they check on Thurann, then they go down the stairs to room 18 and the ghouls disturb the water. After the ghouls spend a minute or so watching the ripples, they head up the western stairs back to room 19, where they spend about 5 minutes basking in the power of the black sun before repeating their circuit. It takes them about 10 minutes altogether.

The zombies attack the nearest enemy, but the ghouls try to paralyze whichever PCs look like clerics or look fast. If a ghoul paralyzes a PC, then both ghouls attack the paralyzed PC. The ghouls shout at the zombies to do likewise, but the zombies won't listen.

The zombies and ghouls fight until slain. They give chase throughout rooms 17, 18, and 19, but not beyond.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Room 17 has only the illumination that the PCs bring with them. The decorative spire in the center of the fountain in room 18 glows like a torch, casting bright light for 5 squares. The sunburst in the floor in room 19 actively absorbs light—it never gets brighter than dim light, no matter how powerful the light source.

Scrying Pool Room: If disturbed, the pool of water in the center of room 18 shows faint images of many of the rooms in the catacombs. Rather than ordinary ripples, the waves and ripples form crude but recognizable images. DMs might need to alter some of these images to reflect rooms the PCs have already cleared out and prisoners they've already rescued.

Room 9: A chamber with four sarcophagi and hobgoblin guards milling around.

Room 10: A room with a displacer beast statue and an altar with a raven atop it. A woman (Mirtala) is trussed up atop the altar.

Room 15: A room with hobgoblins and two drakes.

Room 21: A room with a single sarcophagus. A ridged helmet sits atop the sarcophagus, and a massive hobgoblin in spiked armor is regarding it. If present, Adronsius recognizes the dragoncrest helm.

Room 22: An empty room with four heavy square columns near the corners.

Room 23: A shrine with pews and an obelisk. At the base of the obelisks are shattered shields with the Red Hand insignia on them. You don't have to be Adronsius to figure that one out.

Room 24: A room with two thrones next to each other. One has a skeleton, and the other has a biped of uncertain race.

Room 5: An empty room with funerary alcoves in the walls.

Room 6: A room with two jail cells, one of which holds an older man (Sertanian).

The pool shows each room for only 3 seconds, and the ripples don't show a lot of detail. Splashing or dipping a hand in the water provides sufficient ripples to work through the above list once, with more or less vigorous ripples lasting longer or shorter correspondingly.

Sunburst: When any creature crosses the threshold to enter room 19, the sunburst design set into the flow turns black and the lights dim. Undead creatures that start their turn on a square that's part of the black sunburst regain 5 hit points.

Faultline: The hallway heading west from room 19 has a large faultline running along its length. A DC 15 Dungeoneering check is sufficient to reveal that the floor will collapse if the PCs walk too close together (and anyone can plainly see that the hallway is hazardous). PCs at least two squares away from other PCs are safe, but any two creatures closer

2 Ghouls	Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 200 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 17	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Speed 8, climb 4	
(+) **Claws** (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
ǂ **Ghoulish Bite** (standard; at-will)	
Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +10 vs. AC; 3d6 + 4 damage and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 14 (+4)	**Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)

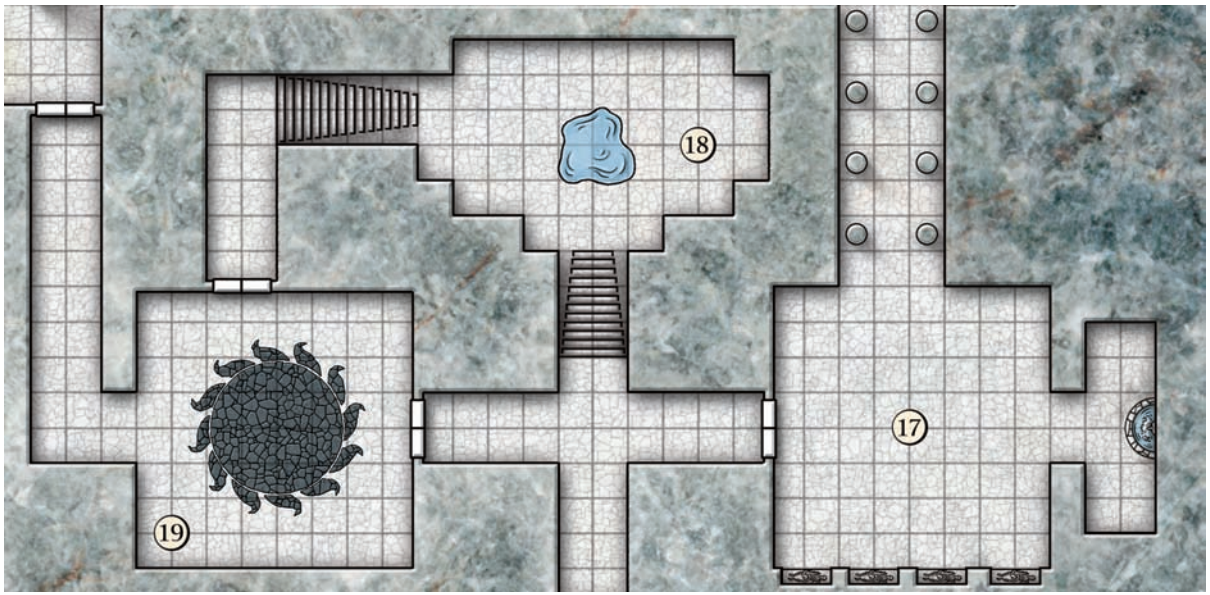
2 Zombies	Level 2 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 125 each
Initiative -1	**Senses** Perception +0; darkvision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20 see also *zombie weakness*	
AC 13; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 9, **Will** 10	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Speed 4	
(+) **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.	
ǂ **Zombie Grab** (standard; at-will)	
+4 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.	
Zombie Weakness	
Any critical hit to the zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 14 (+3)	**Dex** 6 (-1) **Wis** 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	**Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)

together than that triggers a collapse that deals 1d10 damage to everyone in the hallway as the entire length collapses 10 feet. After the collapse, the hallway is difficult terrain and must be climbed 10 feet at each end (Athletics DC 10).

Wall Inscriptions: Carved into the walls is this repeating message: "Honor the Heroic Guardians of Rivenroar."

Alcoves: Skeletal human remains are in alcoves along the south wall of room 17. PCs who spend the 20 minutes necessary to search them (dividing the work if necessary) find treasure parcel I.

Prisoner: Thurann, the 8-year-old son of the guard captain, is tied up at the base of the still fountain in the room 17 annex. Thurann is described on page 8. He doesn't know that his father is dead, but he does know that Zerriksa is being held in a magic circle beyond the mushroom chamber downstairs.



Sinruth's Abode

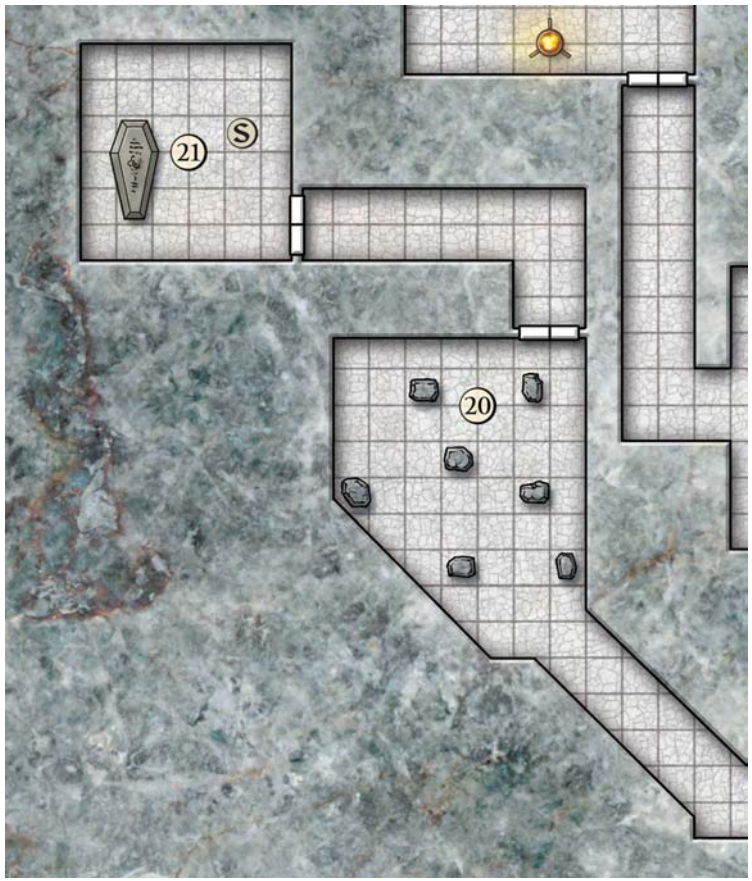
Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

Setup

This room has a solo knock-down, drag-out fight with Sinruth, the leader of the hobgoblins.

Sinruth (S)

Sinruth starts in room 21 but he moves to room 20 if he hears the PCs in there.



When the PCs reach room 20, read:

Thin menhirs are scattered across the floor of this triangular room. A passageway leads north, then turns west—and something beyond that turn is casting light.

Tactics

Sinruth fights with reckless abandon—he wants to be surrounded by the PCs so his chain can do its work. He pulls people close if possible, and then uses *chain whirlwind* as soon as two or three PCs are adjacent. If there are adjacent enemies but no one 2 squares away, Sinruth alternates between pulling people into his armor spikes and knocking them prone, then stomping on them. If he's fighting in room 20, he tries to position himself so that he pulls his enemies into a square with a menhir on it.

Sinruth fights until slain unless you want to save him as a future adversary, in which case he runs through any rooms he believes to be inhabited, figuring that slows down pursuers.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Room 20 has no illumination beyond what the PCs bring with them. Room 21 has a lantern that emits bright light for 10 squares.

Menhirs: The menhirs in room 20 are 8 feet tall and narrow—they don't take up the whole square. They're noticeably cold to the touch. Any creature that starts its turn in a square with a menhir takes 1d6 cold damage.

Sarcophagus: Treasure parcels J and K can be found inside, and it takes only a DC 15 Strength check to open it—this lid is loose.

Sinruth, Hobgoblin Chieftain (S)	**Level 2 Soldier Solo**
Medium natural humanoid, goblin	XP 150
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 185; **Bloodied** 92	
AC 22 (24 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 12	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 5	
Action Points 2	
⸸ **Chain Yank** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires spiked chain; reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is pulled 1. If creature is adjacent, *chain yank* instead briefly bashes the creature against Sinruth's armor spikes for an extra 1d6 damage.	
⸸ **Chain Trip** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires spiked chain; reach 2; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
✧ **Chain Whirlwind** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires spiked chain; close burst 1; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
⸸ **Jackboot Stomp** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires adjacent prone target; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)	
Sinruth rolls a saving throw against the effect.	
Phalanx Soldier	
Sinruth gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidate +8	
Str 17 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+3)
Equipment plate armor, spiked chain	

Brindol Treasure: Sinruth is wearing the gauntlets from the Hall of Great Valor, and the dragoncrest helm is sitting on the sarcophagus in room 21.

Sinruth's Papers: In his breast pocket, Sinruth keeps a region map (similar to the one on page 6, but with several paths and good ambush spots marked), a map of Brindol (similar to the one on page 8, but with the Hall of Great Valor), and the letter from the Emissary (see page 45).

Crypt Guardian Chamber

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

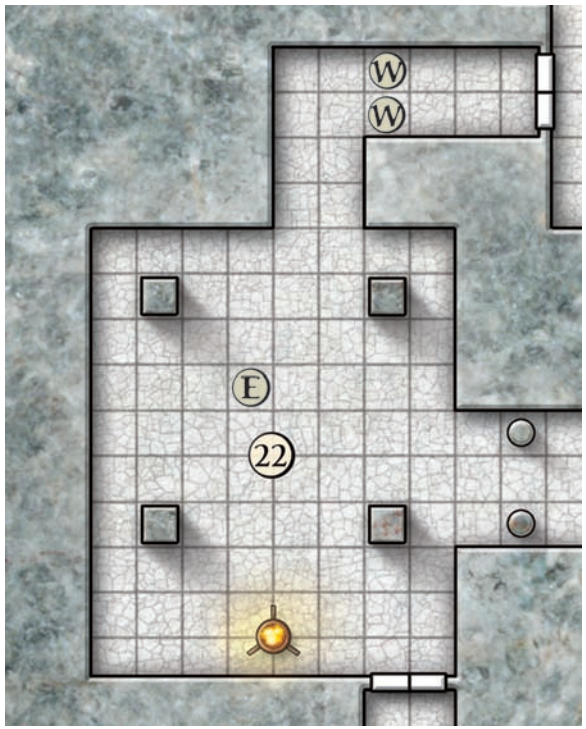
Setup

The wererats trigger a rampaging evistro, then join in the mayhem themselves.

1 evistro (E)
2 wererats (W)

When the PCs move close to either the southern or the eastern doorway, read:

A foul creature stalks the space bounded by the square columns, but it stops short of crossing that boundary.



2 Wererats (W)	Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 150 each
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24	
Regeneration 5 (if the wererat takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13	
Immune filth fever (see below)	
Speed 6, climb 4 (not in human form)	
(+) **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon** +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
(+) **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Disease** +8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (see below).	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph** A wererat can alter its physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique human (see Change Shape on page 280 in the *Monster Manual*). It loses its bite attack in human form.	
Combat Advantage The wererat deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10	
Str 10 (+1)	**Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+1)
Equipment cloak, short sword	

When the PCs attract the evistro's attention, read:

The evistro throws itself against an invisible barrier, unable to get to you. But then a wererat appears at the northern doorway and yells, "I release you, crypt guardian!

Tactics

The evistro fights until slain. The wererats flee when reduced to below 10 hit points, heading to room 23.

Evistro (Carnage Demon) (E)	Level 6 Brute
Medium elemental magical beast (demon)	XP 250
Initiative +4	**Senses** Perception +4
HP 90; **Bloodied** 45	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14	
Resist 10 variable (1/encounter; see glossary)	
Speed 6	
(+) **Claws** (standard; at-will) +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
Destructive Bite (minor; at-will) Bloodied target only; +8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.	
Carnage The carnage demon gains a +1 bonus to melee attacks if it has one or more allies adjacent to its target (+3 if one of these allies is another carnage demon). This bonus stacks with combat advantage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal
Str 21 (+8)	**Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 20 (+8)	**Int** 5 (+0) **Cha** 7 (+1)

Unlike other guardians that were bound to specific chambers, the evistro pursues fleeing PCs all the way to the entry room.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The brazier in the corner provides bright light within 10 squares.

Square Prison: The evistro is bound to remain within the square in the middle of the chamber until someone gives it permission to leave. Then it gets an hour to find and kill as many intruders as it can find. It considerd the goblins, hobgoblins, and other creatures that live here as "residents."

Filth Fever	Level 3 Disease
The target is cured.	**Initial Effect** The target loses 1 healing surge.
	The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense.
	Final Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense. The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points.

Shrine of the Obelisk

Encounter Level 1 (450 XP)

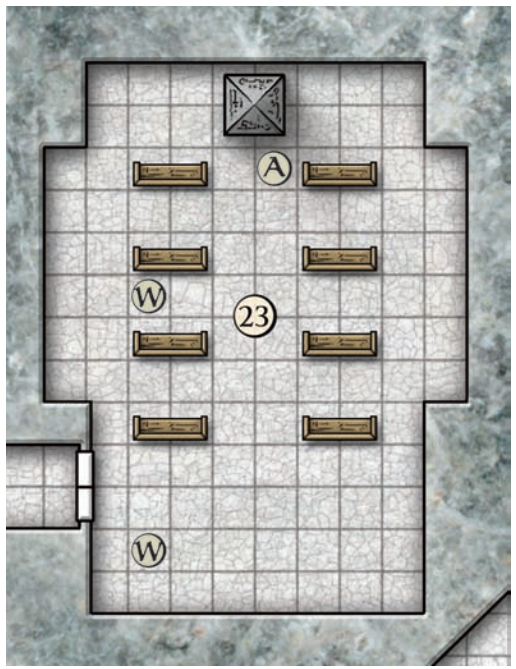
Setup

The rest of the wererats are here, along with the arcanist that leads the gnomes.

1 gnome arcanist (A)
2 wererats (W)

When the PCs reach the southwest doorway, read:

Lines of pews make it clear that this was once a shrine dedicated to the rune-encrusted obelisk at the north end of the room. A gnome stands next to the obelisk, and sidling toward the doorway are two more wererats, their teeth glinting in the torchlight.



Gnome Arcanist (A)	**Level 3 Controller (Leader)**
Small fey humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +1	**Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
Aura of Illusion (Illusion) aura 5; the gnome arcanist and all allies in the aura gain concealment and can hide in the aura.	
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	
Speed 5; see also *fey step*	
(+) **Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ Weapon**	
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.	
Scintillating Bolt (standard; at-will) **✦ Radiant**	
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Startling Glamor (minor; at-will) **✦ Fear, Illusion**	
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target shifts 1 square	
Illusory Terrain (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) **✦ Illusion**	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends).	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome arcanist takes damage; encounter) **✦ Illusion**	
The gnome arcanist turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Fey Step (move; encounter) **✦ Teleportation**	
The gnome arcanist teleports 5 squares.	
Reactive Stealth	
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +8, Insight +6, Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+1)	**Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	**Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+3)
Equipment robes, dagger	

Tactics

The wererats try to keep the PCs occupied in melee so that the gnome can make ranged attacks safely. The wererats try to flank a PC, but not if it means risking an enemy running over to engage the gnome.

The wererats know they're cornered. They fight to the death. But the gnome saves *fey step* and *reactive stealth* to try to escape if reduced below 15 hit points.

2 Wererats (W)	**Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 150 each
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 48; **Bloodied** 24	
Regeneration 5 (if the wererat takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13	
Immune filth fever (see below)	
Speed 6, climb 4 (not in human form)	
(+) **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) **✦ Weapon**	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
(+) **Bite** (standard; at-will) **✦ Disease**	
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (see below).	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) **✦ Polymorph**	
A wererat can alter its physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique human (see Change Shape, page 280 in the *Monster Manual*). It loses its bite attack in human form.	
Combat Advantage	
The wererat deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10	
Str 10 (+1)	**Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+1)
Equipment cloak, short sword	

Features of the Area

Illumination: Torches to the left and right of the obelisks would ordinarily emit bright light for 5 squares, but the obelisk appears to have the same light-absorbing property as the sunburst in room 19, so the illumination in this room never exceeds dim.

Pews: Squares with pews count as difficult terrain.

Obelisk: A DC 15 Religion check reveals iconography common to worshipers of Vecna. Other than the weird effect on lighting, the obelisk is not magical.

Rivenroar Treasure: The ceremonial sword, the broken shields, and the battle standard are here.

Lords of Rivenroar Audience Chamber

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Setup

The deathlock commands the other undead in the Rivenroar catacombs. Unlike Sinruth, the wight loves intruders—they have the life energy that he craves.

1 deathlock wight (D)
1 boneshard skeleton (B)
5 decrepit skeletons

The decrepit skeletons arise in the middle of the first round (roll initiative for them, but don't place them yet).

When the PCs reach either doorway, read:

Two thrones sit along the north wall of this immense chamber. One has a rotting but still fleshy corpse on it, and the other has a bleached skeleton. Other piles of bone litter the ground.

The eyes of the fleshy corpse begin to glow. "Intrudersssss!" it lisps. "Consssssssume them!"

Tactics

The first thing the deathlock wight does is shout "Arise, my warriors!" At that point, five of the bone piles coalesce into decrepit skeletons—place them on the map at this point. Then the wight takes its turn, and the decrepit skeletons take their normal place in the initiative order.

The wight tries to paralyze as many enemies with *grave bolt* as possible, especially any PC that looks like a cleric or paladin. When PCs move too close, the wight uses *horrific visage* to make some breathing room. It saves its reanimate power for when the boneshard skeleton dies, because it knows that the decrepit skeletons keep coming back indefinitely.

The boneshard skeleton picks whatever appears to be the most competent melee combatant and attacks, first with the *boneshard* and then with the scimitar. It uses its *boneshard blast* if it can hit three or more PCs with it.

The decrepit skeletons are bolstered by the necromantic energies coursing through the catacombs. Each round at the beginning of the decrepit skeletons' turn, one slain decrepit skeleton returns to life. The only way to stop this perpetual reanimation is for all living creatures to leave the chamber or for all five decrepit skeletons to be dead at the start of the decrepit skeletons' turn.

Features of the Area

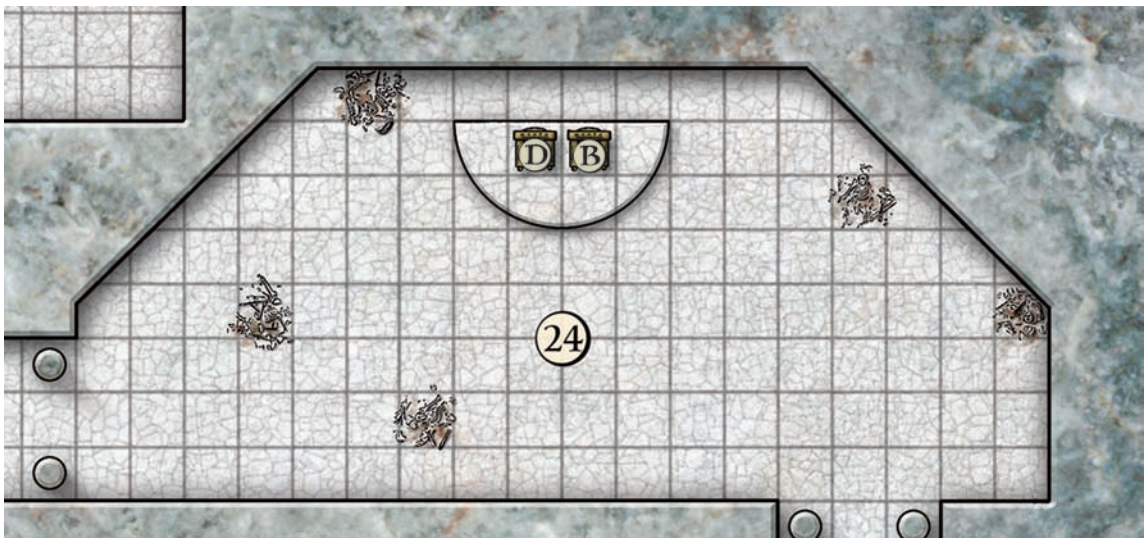
Illumination: None beyond what the PCs bring with them.

Thrones: They appear golden, but it's just gilt.

Bone Piles: Five of these—you choose which ones—animate and become decrepit skeletons at the start of the deathlock wight's first turn. The others are merely difficult terrain—not that the PCs are likely to step in those squares anyway.

Frescos: Paintings on the walls depict a series of older, robed humans, standing on clouds or riding chariots through the sky. The faces are more realistic than the other elements, suggesting that the art is intended as portraiture. A History check (DC 20) indicates that at least some match historical descriptions of the lords of Rivenroar. Three of the portraits along the south wall have been defaced.

Treasure: Parcels L, M, and N are in this room, preferably mounted on the walls or attached to the throne somehow.



Deathlock Wight (D) **Level 4 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 175

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; darkvision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

Claw (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 necrotic damage, and the target loses 1 healing surge.

Grave Bolt (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Reanimate (minor; encounter) ✦ **Healing, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; affects a destroyed undead creature of a level no higher than the deathlock wight's level + 2; the target stands as a free action with a number of hit points equal to one-half its bloodied value. This power does not affect minions.

Horrific Visage (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Fear**
Close blast 5; +7 vs. Will; 1d6 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10

Str 10 (+2)	**Dex** 14 (+4)	**Wis** 9 (+1)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 16 (+5)	**Cha** 18 (+6)

5 Decrepit Skeletons **Level 1 Minion**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 25 each

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Immune disease, poison
Speed 6

Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Shortbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 15 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 3 (-4)	**Cha** 3 (-4)

Equipment heavy shield, longsword, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows

Boneshard Skeleton (B) **Level 5 Brute**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 200

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38 see also *boneshard burst*
AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

Scimitar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11) plus 5 necrotic damage.

Boneshard (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Boneshard Burst (when first bloodied and again when the boneshard skeleton is reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Necrotic**
Close burst 3; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 16 (+5)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 3 (-2)	**Cha** 3 (-2)

Equipment scimitar

Brave Sinruth,
The Red Hand will rise again! The other remnants take great cheer in your recent attacks on commerce coming into The Blight That is Brindol.

We're particularly pleased with your ability to inspire a fighting spirit in others, whether they have true goblin blood or merely wish they did. To be blunt, we think you should have many more soldiers under your command. Many, many more.

And recent events have rendered some remnants leaderless. With a bold stroke on your part, the remnants would rally to the Red Hand you so proudly display.

As your bold stroke, do this: Attack the The Blight That is Brindol by night. Focus your efforts on their Hall of Great Valor, for it mocks the many hard-won victories by the first Red Hand of Doom. Take from them the spoils of war they shamelessly hang on their walls and bring those antiques back to Rivenroar.

Do this before the moon is next full. And with regard to your previous question, turning over captives to your unliving allies at Rivenroar is perfectly acceptable. War sometimes makes strange bedfellows, and we appreciate how you've united such disparate forces under your banner. Whatever prisoners you take from Rivenroar you can give to the wight.

Fight with the valor of your ancestors, Sinruth. And keep your hands stained red with the blood of the weak!

I will visit you again next month, at a time of my choosing.

The Emissary

About the Author

David Noonan is a designer/developer for Wizards of the Coast. His credits include co-designing *Dungeon Master's Guide II*, *Heroes of Battle*, and numerous products for the Eberron campaign setting. He lives in Washington state with his wife, son, and daughter.

The Haunting of Kincep Mansion

HEROIC
1–10

D&D fans got their first look at Kincep mansion back in 2003, when the place appeared in the "Vicious Venues" feature on the Wizards of the Coast website. With the release of a new edition of the game, we thought a fresh look at the mansion and what's going on there now was in order.

"The Haunting of Kincep Mansion" is a 4th-Edition Dungeons & Dragons adventure for five characters of 12th level.

by Skip Williams

illustrations by John Moriarty, Dave Allsop, David Griffith and Franz Vohwinkel
✦ *cartography by Daniel Reeve*

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Adventure Background

This mansion was once a manor house owned by the Kinceps. They were an old and respected noble family, though not one of any great political import. Though fairly wealthy, the Kinceps lived simply and enjoyed few luxuries, avoiding anything ostentatious. The family home was large but practical, well hidden behind an encircling orchard. A small mausoleum is the final resting place of family members.

A point of pride among the Kinceps was that each generation should make its own way in life, starting out with a small inheritance and earning a living through business, adventuring, or public service. In more recent years, a series of misfortunes and disasters all but wiped out the youngest generation of Kinceps. Many believed that the family had fallen into poverty, then died out.

In fact, the sole heir, Jaccobux Kincep, had traveled to foreign lands as an adventurer and mercenary, becoming rich in the process. In time, he returned to his family home, which had already fallen into disrepair, and settled down to retire with his extensive collection of books. Jaccobux became a scholarly hermit, poring over texts day and night, and barely eating and seldom sleeping. Old age eventually overcame him one afternoon as he sat reading in his favorite armchair, but Jaccobux didn't notice. He kept right on reading and taking copious notes. Jaccobux had become a ghost.

The old Kincep mansion is best located on a hilltop at the edge of a village or town, but it also might exist on the outskirts of a city. The area behind the mansion includes the remains of a formal garden, an overgrown hedge maze, and a stone mausoleum. No matter what the location, having a graveyard nearby should make the place seem even more sinister.

Jaccobux Kincep

Jaccobux is bound to the mansion and its grounds, particularly to the vast library he accumulated during his life. Even after death, he has continued to acquire the knowledge he craves, relying on both his own abilities and the services of the few travelers who drop in. Cali and her troupe have been especially helpful in this regard.

In life, Jaccobux was a wizard and a professional adventurer. He developed a thirst for knowledge in his old age and became a prodigious collector of books. He read avidly right up until the moment of his death, and his deep regret that he had so many books left to read held him in the mortal world as a ghost.

Jaccobux is mostly harmless, if eccentric. So long as he has his books, he's not likely to harm anyone. If the PCs offer to supply him with more reading material, he might even become a valuable ally. The old ghost has some potent magical powers, as well as a book of rituals (the collection should include Magic Mouth, as well as rituals for creating and animating golems and guardians). He is also a font of information on many historical and arcane subjects.

Adventure Synopsis

Despite Jaccobux's scholarly ways, a big, intact building tends to attract squatters. Over the years, several groups of monsters have settled in the place. Eventually the newcomers manage to annoy either the ghost or the local authorities and are driven out, leaving Jaccobux to his books.

The latest group of "guests" consists of the vampire lord Cali, a horde of vampire spawn and ghouls, and several werewolves and dire wolves. These creatures have thus far managed to stay out of Jaccobux's way, but they've made their presence felt in the neighborhood. Jaccobux is unconcerned with the squatters so far, and has even taken advantage of their presence to protect his cherished privacy. The PCs are drawn into the situation when the local authorities ask them to investigate.

The PCs approach the mansion, through the overgrown orchard and either along its weedy drive to the front entrance or through the tangled garden in back. They are confronted by Cali's werewolf allies, intent on keeping nosy strangers away from the mansion. The party can try to capture and interrogate a werewolf and thus learn about the vampire and possibly find a way past the booby-trapped entrance.

Jaccobux has turned the statues decorating the mansion's front entrance into deadly, animated guardians. The party can bypass these with the appropriate pass phrase (which a werewolf might provide) or by disguising themselves as wolves; otherwise they must destroy the relentless defenders. The sounds of battle might attract the attention of other monsters. If they attempt the rear entrance, they must be disguised as undead or face another set of animated statues.

If the PCs investigate more of the crumbling estate, they run afoul of other dangers. In the stable is an animated carriage; the hedge maze is infested by ghouls; Cali and her vampire spawn inhabit the old mausoleum. Cali has a main coffin here and another under the table in the library; Jaccobux knows where both of them are. Eventually, the PCs meet Jaccobux himself, still reading.

Once the party deals with Cali and either defeats or reasons with Jaccobux, the adventure is over. Cali's werewolf allies quit the place for good when the vampire is destroyed. Any vampire spawn that survive are forced to linger on the estate because they don't have coffins anywhere else. Jaccobux is likely to destroy these creatures himself (if he survives); he's had enough of hosting bloodsuckers that draw unwanted attention to the estate.

If the PCs don't destroy Jaccobux, the ghost just keeps reading his books, perhaps writing a few of his own. He'd be happy to hire the PCs as his agents for dealing with booksellers and other scholars. If they do destroy him, they're free to loot his library (level 12 treasure).

There isn't much other treasure to be had on the estate, though Cali has some wealth. See the entry for the mausoleum (page 51) for details. If the PCs have been hired to rescue any missing people, they receive monetary rewards for their return, as described in the next section.

Adventure Hooks

The estate's new residents could come to the party's attention in various ways.

Hunters Hunted: A group of hunters visited the hill recently, looking to collect a few wolf pelts. The wolves they found (in reality, werewolves and dire wolf "pets") were deadly. The hunters tried to take refuge in the mansion, but the animated statues drove them off. Since their visit, Cali has called in some reinforcements.

The survivors eventually limped back to the nearest town, where they told chilling tales of enormous wolves, jumping statues, and demonic eyes staring from the shadows. The PCs might hear the tale secondhand or directly and decide to investigate on their own. If they don't, the local authorities might hire them to do so.

Quest Rewards: 700 XP and 250 gp for bringing information to the authorities.

Stolen Goods: A caravan stopped near the base of the hill to camp for the night. Groups sent into the orchard to gather firewood didn't return, and wolves (plus a few unseen archers) attacked during the night. By morning, there were many casualties, and some people had mysteriously disappeared. The survivors fled to a nearby town and warned everyone to avoid the hill. The PCs might be hired to investigate the attack, to rescue the missing people, or both.

The missing people fell victim, one by one, to Cali's *dominating gaze*. They're being held in the mansion, waiting to become Cali's newest spawn.

Quest Rewards: 4,000 XP and 500 gp for rescuing the prisoners.

Lost Youth: Cali is using the mansion as a base to infiltrate nearby towns, both for food and for new minions. Her bloodsucking has not gone unnoticed. To make matters worse, Cali has lured several youngsters away from their homes. These victims left with whatever valuables they could grab, making their exit doubly painful.

The panicked families appeal for help, and the PCs are recruited for a search-and-rescue mission. The disappearances and nocturnal attacks seem to be centered on the old mansion.

Quest Rewards: 2,500 XP and 500 gp for discovering the fate of the missing youths; 1,500 additional XP for rescuing any.

The Orchard

The PCs must travel through the old estate's orchard to reach the mansion (see the "Mansion and Orchard" map). The orchard has gone wild and is largely fallen to successive waves of blight.

A veritable thicket of gnarled old fruit trees has grown up here. There doesn't seem to be a straight or healthy trunk or bough in the bunch. A thick mat of fallen leaves, broken branches, and rotting fruit covers the ground underfoot, leaving only a few tufts of scraggly weeds growing here and there.

A search through the orchard reveals a couple of old stone buildings that hold rusty gardening tools. One building also contains a broken-down cider press and a few barrels of spoiled cider. Another, larger building houses a basin with a natural spring that still provides good water, despite being mostly choked with debris from the orchard.

A winding track climbs the hill through the orchard and leads to the mansion.

If the PCs follow the track, they find the path blocked about three-quarters of the way up, where a werewolf archer lies in ambush.

Tactical Encounter: "Who Goes There?" (page 54)

If the PCs poke around in the orchard and approach the buildings, they run afoul of a hunting pack.

Tactical Encounter: "Orchard Ambush" (page 56)

Development

If the party manages to capture a werewolf, they can interrogate it to get some information about the mansion. Treat this as a 12th-level skill challenge of complexity 2 and moderate difficulty: The base DC for skill checks is 22. See "Skill Challenges" on page 72 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for guidelines, as well as the sample interrogation on page 79. If the PCs promise to let the werewolf go—and can convince it to believe them—they gain a +5 bonus to their skill checks. (Have the interrogator make a Bluff check opposed by the werewolf's Insight check.)

If the party is successful, the werewolf admits that it serves a vampire, who keeps her coffin in the mausoleum behind the manor house (area 16 on the "House and Grounds" map). It also mentions that the ghost of Jaccobux Kincep lurks among his books on the upper floor.

In addition, the werewolf reveals the existence of pass phrases for getting past the guardian statues at the front entrance to the mansion. If the PCs are interrogating the werewolf from the ambush, he has hidden a document containing these phrases in a packet hidden under the barricade. (If the PCs don't interrogate the werewolf, they can locate the packet by searching under the barrier and making a DC 25 Perception check.) Three different pass phrases are written on the document, and Jaccobux changes the pass phrase daily. The werewolf has never used them, since it always approaches the mansion in dire wolf form, and can't remember which one is current. It picks one at random and tells the PCs it's correct.

The other werewolves also know about the pass phrases but not the location of the document.

Mansion and Grounds

The bulk of the adventure's action takes place here. The "House and Grounds" map shows the mansion's two floors (including the attached stables) and the grounds to front and rear.

1. Front Entrance

The front doors open onto a narrow porch with stairs leading up about 10 feet from the drive below.

Tactical Encounter: "Welcoming Committee" (page 58)

2. Main Hall

The wide area in front of the stairways has a ceiling that rises 25 feet to a vault. The dotted line on the map shows the edge of the balcony railing in area 17.

The stairs spiral up 12 feet to area 17.

3. Sitting Room

This area once served as a reception area and waiting room for the mansion. It still holds a few sticks of well-padded but decaying furniture.

4. Storage Closets

These two small rooms hold moldering linens, cleaning supplies, and household implements. A thorough search of each room takes at least 15 minutes, revealing nothing valuable or even interesting.

5. Music Room

The Kinceps once kept an extensive collection of musical instruments. As the family fortunes declined, all the instruments were sold off (though Jaccobux might have a survivor or two stashed in his library). The only things left in here now are a few threadbare chairs and some padded benches along the inner walls.

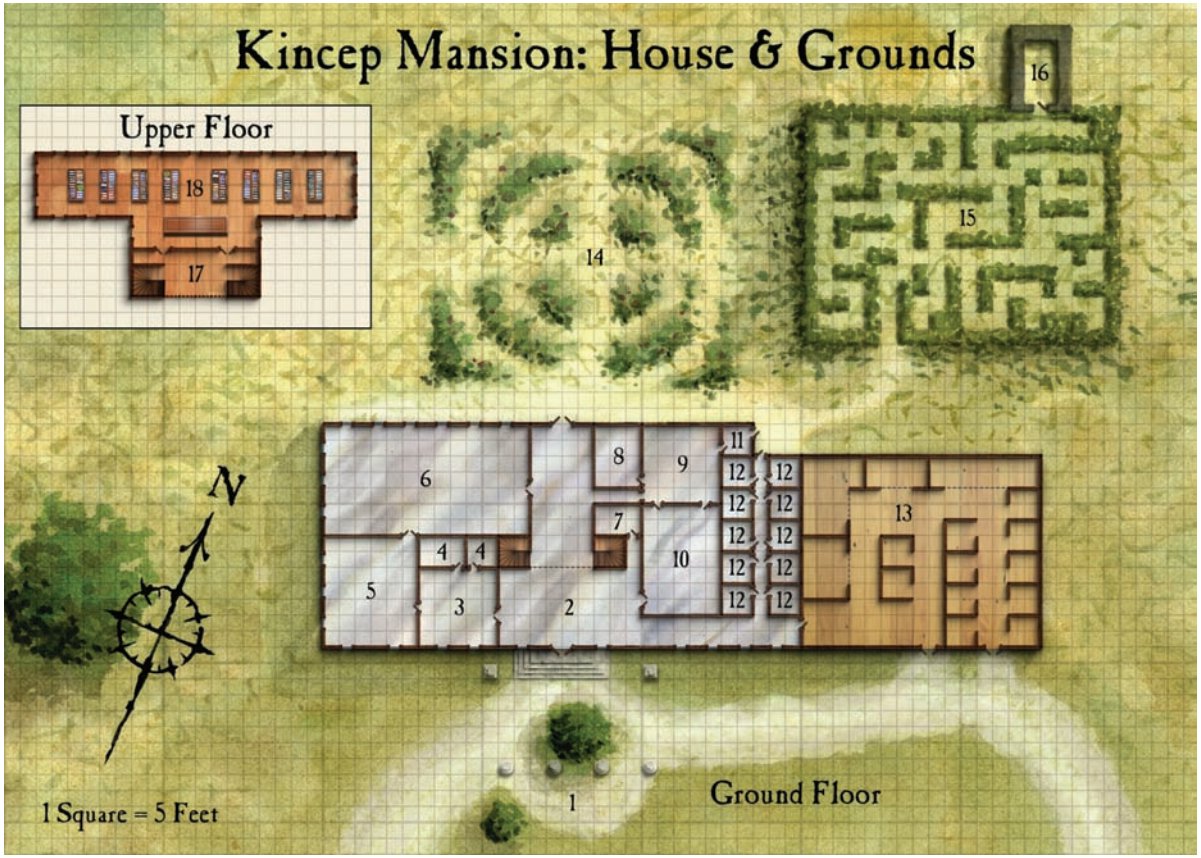
6. Ballroom

This chamber has a brightly polished marble floor, and the southern wall is lined with floor-to-ceiling mirrors. Several wrought-iron chains hang from the ceiling. These once held up crystal chandeliers, but the family sold them long ago.

Before his transition to a ghostly state, Jaccobux used this area as a workroom, and the place still contains several sturdy benches strewn with tools, stone chips, and scraps of wood.

7. Chamberlain's Room

This little room was once the private chamber for the servant entrusted with managing the estate, as well as a repository for all the place's records. Jaccobux has moved the records to the library (area 18). All that remains now are empty shelves, a desk, and a bed without a mattress.



8. Pantry

The Kinceps stored most of their food and drink here. The temperature is never higher than 38° Fahrenheit, thanks to an old ritual. Today, a few badly dressed carcasses hang from the ceiling, and a few barrels of ale and poor-quality wine stand on the floor. These supplies are intended for Cali's werewolf servants.

9. Kitchen

The stink of decaying flesh pervades the air in this room. The kitchen is still well equipped, with a fireplace, ovens, and food preparation areas. The werewolves have prepared a few meals here, but they haven't cleaned up after themselves. The stench comes from their rotten leavings.

A basin on the outer wall has a broken tap that once carried water in from a reservoir higher up the hill, but the pipes are now ruptured and the tap is dry.

Cali has turned the dry pipes into a highway of sorts. If she assumes mist form in the mausoleum (area 16), she can use a burrow leading from there to the broken pipes and follow them to this room.

10. Dining Area

This chamber still holds a few heavy tables, sideboards, and padded chairs. The place is littered with crumbs from the last meal of the resident werewolves. The dire wolves devoured most of the scraps.

11. Servants' Entry

This small room still has racks for cloaks and a bar for scraping footwear.

12. Servants' Quarters

Each of these tiny chambers contains a bed, a chest of drawers, and a chair.

If Cali and her servants have taken any prisoners (see the "Stolen Goods" hook), each is held in one of these chambers, behind a locked door. The prisoner is chained to the bed for good measure. The manacles have a break DC of 28; a DC 25 Thievery check can unlock them. Cali keeps the keys in her main coffin in the mausoleum (area 16).

13. Stables

The area contains stalls intended for horses and mules, storage areas for carts (one of which still contains a carriage), and a loft for bedding and feed.

The northwestern corner has a stone basin with a tap that still delivers cold water. A pile of wooden buckets stands nearby.

Tactical Encounter: "Heavy Traffic" (page 60)

14. Overgrown Garden

A visitor can still see, and smell, a hint of this area's former botanical splendor. Everything has run wild now, leaving the place a riot of untamed vines and leaves.

Tactical Encounter: "Rearguard" (page 61)

15. Hedge Maze

Towering hedges form a labyrinth here. Read the following if characters enter the maze.

Dense hedges of some sturdy evergreen tower as high as a giant, forming the walls of a green maze. Walkways of crushed stone, littered with twigs and leaves, wind between the hedges. The peaked roof of a building made from somber gray stone is just visible in the distance over the hedge tops. Massive, hoary trees surround the structure, keeping it in perpetual gloom.

The building in the distance is the mausoleum (area 16). A nest of ghouls has moved into the maze and now helps protect the resident vampires.

Tactical Encounter: "Amazing Graves" (page 63)

16. Mausoleum

This stone building houses the remains of many generations of Kinceps. The building is two stories tall, with a peaked roof and low windows.

Niches in the walls and floors hold the remains. Cali and her spawn have usurped the top tier of wall niches and have piled the previous residents' bones in one of the floor niches.

A thick hedge, 12 feet high, surrounds the mausoleum on all sides, leaving no visible entrances. Read the following if the PCs study the exterior:

Dense hedges reach nearly to the building's eaves, leaving 6 feet of blank stone wall exposed. No opening is visible. Massive trees stand at each of the structure's corners. Their canopies interlock over the structure, obscuring the sky.

The mausoleum's entrance lies behind a false hedge that characters can walk through, though it looks just as impenetrable as the rest.

Tactical Encounter: "Murder in the Mausoleum" (page 65)

Development

If the PCs search the mausoleum after dealing with the vampires, they find Cali's cache of wealth (level 12 treasure), as well as the keys to the manacles of any prisoners in area 12. The treasure should not include magic items that Cali could use against the party.

17. Balcony

This area overlooks the front portion of the main hall (area 2) and allows a view of the front entrance (area 1).

A railing about 3 feet high marks the balcony's edge. This wooden structure has a break DC of 18 and provides cover against attacks launched from or through area 2.

A werewolf archer is always on watch here. It is quick to notice if anyone approaches or if anything untoward happens, and it warns Jaccobux about intruders.

Development

If the party attacks the werewolf, it retreats to the library and fights alongside Jaccobux.

The werewolf archer might also become involved in fights occurring in the entrance or main hall, or in the garden (area 14).

18. Library

Jaccobux spends virtually all his time in here, endlessly poring over his books. He does not appreciate being interrupted, and his "houseguests" might also be present.

Tactical Encounter: "In the Library" (page 67)

Development

Jaccobux would rather be left alone, but he is willing to talk to the PCs to avoid a fight. He claims to be nothing more than a simple scholar immersed in the pursuit of knowledge. If the PCs let him, he rambles on about some obscure historical or philosophical

Werewolf Archer	**Level 13 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)**
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 1,600

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision
Call of the Wild aura 5; a lycanthrope ally in the aura (including the werewolf archer) can shift 1 square as a minor action.
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
Regeneration 10 (if the werewolf archer takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)
AC 29; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2
Immune moon frenzy (see page 53)
Speed 6 (8 in dire wolf form)
Action Points 1

Greatclub (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage; see also *blood rage*.

Bite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Disease**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and contracts moon frenzy (see page 53); see also *blood rage*.

Longbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +18 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage.

Blood Rage
The werewolf archer's melee attacks deal 4 extra damage against a bloodied target.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
The werewolf archer can alter its physical form to appear as a dire wolf or a unique human (*MM* 280). It cannot use its bite attack in human form and cannot make greatclub or longbow attacks in dire wolf form.

Defensive Mobility
The werewolf archer gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Hunter's Quarry (minor; at-will, once per round)
The werewolf archer designates the nearest enemy as its quarry. One of its attacks against the quarry deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter or the werewolf archer designates a new quarry.

Prime Shot
If none of the werewolf archer's allies is closer to a target than the archer is, the archer gains a +1 bonus to ranged attack rolls against that target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff+12, Dungeoneering +14, Insight +14, Intimidate +12, Nature +14, Stealth +15

Str 24 (+13)	**Dex** 18 (+10)	**Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 24 (+13)	**Int** 11 (+6)	**Cha** 13 (+7)

Equipment leather armor, greatclub, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

topic, peppering his remarks with references to obscure authors and frequently digressing with tales about how he obtained the various books he's read on the subject.

If the PCs ask him about the mansion's guardians, Jaccobux points out that even harmless people need protection. He's aghast at the idea that he is hosting a vampire and insists that Cali is merely a fellow scholar who understands nature well enough to befriend a few wolves. (He knows better, but he plays the fool.) If the PCs point out that having werewolves and vampires on the property might endanger his books, he looks thoughtful, then agrees to stand aside while the party deals with them.

Moon Frenzy Level 8 Disease

Endurance stable DC 20, improve DC 24, worsen DC 19 or lower

The target is cured.

◀ **Initial Effect** The target takes a -2 penalty to Will defense.

◀▶ While bloodied, the target must make a saving throw at the end of each turn. If the saving throw fails, the target makes a melee attack on its next turn against a random target within 5 squares of it. If no targets are within 5 squares, it does nothing but move in a randomly chosen direction.

▶ **Final State** The target attacks the nearest creature in its line of sight. If it can't see any other creatures, it does nothing but move in a randomly chosen direction.

Inside the Mansion

Unless noted otherwise, areas in the mansion have the following features.

Illumination: The mansion's many windows provide bright light during daylight hours. The interior becomes dark about an hour before sunset and stays dark until an hour after sunrise.

Ceilings: Ceilings are 12 feet high.

Doors: The mansion has fairly lightweight wooden interior doors that open easily unless locked. Locked doors have a break DC of 16. The Thievery DC to pick the locks is 22.

The exterior doors are a little stronger (break DC 20). They're fitted with locks but are currently unlocked. If someone locks them, the Thievery DC to pick the locks is 25.

Jaccobux has a set of keys to all the doors.

Floors: The mansion has stone floors at ground level and wooden floors in the upper story. A stone floor requires a DC 43 Strength check to break, but only damp ground is underneath. Wooden floors have a break DC of 30.

Walls: The mansion has wooden interior walls about 6 inches thick. These require a DC 26 Strength check to break and a DC 30 Athletics check to climb.

The exterior walls are stone, about a foot thick. They have a break DC of 35. They're covered with ivy on the outside, requiring a DC 15 Athletics check to climb; the check increases to DC 30 inside.

Windows: The mansion has dozens of windows that consist of leaded glass panes set in metal frames that swing open like double doors. Window openings are about 4 feet wide and 7 feet high.

The windows open easily from the inside, but they're latched shut and difficult to force open from the outside. In addition, the glass and frames are magically enhanced. A closed window has a break DC of 28. It's possible to slip a tool into the frame and open the latch, requiring a DC 30 Thievery check.

Anyone pushed out a window by an attack can grab at the frames, gaining a +2 bonus to saving throws to avoid falling. Even on the lower floor, the windows are 10 feet off the ground (1d10 falling damage). The upper windows (areas 17 and 18) are 22 feet above the ground (2d10 falling damage).

A creature at a window has cover against an attack if line of effect passes through the window.

Who Goes There?

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

Setup

Cali, Jaccobux's vampire houseguest, has decided to discourage visitors to the mansion by blocking the drive leading up the hill. Her werewolf allies have felled a couple of big trees to form a barricade. They've taken pains to conceal their handiwork, but perceptive characters can notice that the blockage isn't natural. One male werewolf and a few dire wolves remain behind to monitor the roadblock.

Place the PCs on the drive toward the southeastern corner of the map.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 werewolf archer (A)
3 vicious dire wolves (W)

In addition, this encounter also includes two areas that contain several snare traps.

2 fields of snares (S)

The dire wolves lie hidden in the thickets next to the drive. They're belly down in a hollow and have total concealment. (Don't place them on the map until they attack.) The werewolf sits behind the roadblock and emerges when any visitors approach.

Perception Check (DC 25): You make out the telltale signs of axe and saw cuts in the tree trunks. Someone has made an effort to conceal them, by hacking at the cuts to make them look like natural breaks and rubbing them with dirt to simulate age and weathering.

If the check fails, the pile of logs looks natural to the character: One tree apparently fell, taking several others with it.

Nature Check (Trained Only) DC 20: These trees don't look like they fell naturally, as they would if they'd been knocked down in a windstorm or by a lightning strike. Someone cut them down, then dragged them, one at a time, across the drive.

When the archer decides to reveal himself, read:

The mass of fallen trees blocking the road gives a creak, and a human head wearing a gray hunter's cap appears from behind it, quickly followed by a lean, muscular body. The newcomer stands atop the logs and leans casually on a strung longbow.

"What ho, gentles!" says the man. "I'm afraid it will take a team of woodcutters and more than a few horses or oxen to drag all this clear. If you're determined to pass, you must take to the woods."

3 Vicious Dire Wolves (W) **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount) XP 300 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
HP 83; **Bloodied** 41
AC 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Speed 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, or 2d8 + 5 damage against a prone target.

Combat Advantage
The dire wolf gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the dire wolf's allies adjacent to it. If the dire wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

Pack Hunter (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**
The dire wolf's rider gains combat advantage against an enemy if it has at least one ally other than its mount adjacent to the target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 19 (+7) **Int** 5 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+3)

Werewolf Archer **Level 13 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)**
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 1,600

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision
Call of the Wild aura 5; a lycanthrope ally in the aura (including the werewolf archer) can shift 1 square as a minor action.
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
Regeneration 10 (if the werewolf archer takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)
AC 29; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2
Immune moon frenzy (see page 53)
Speed 6 (8 in dire wolf form)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage; see also *blood rage*.

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Disease**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and contracts moon frenzy (see page 53); see also *blood rage*.

➶ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +18 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage.

Blood Rage
The werewolf archer's melee attacks deal 4 extra damage against a bloodied target.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
The werewolf archer can alter its physical form to appear as a dire wolf or a unique human (*MM* 280). It cannot use its bite attack in human form and cannot make greatclub or longbow attacks in dire wolf form.

Defensive Mobility
The werewolf archer gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Hunter's Quarry (minor; at-will, once per round)
The werewolf archer designates the nearest enemy as its quarry. One of its attacks against the quarry deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter or the werewolf archer designates a new quarry.

Prime Shot
If none of the werewolf archer's allies is closer to a target than the archer is, the archer gains a +1 bonus to ranged attack rolls against that target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff+12, Dungeoneering +14, Insight +14, Intimidate +12, Nature +14, Stealth +15
Str 24 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 24 (+13) **Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, greatclub, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

2 Fields of Snares (S)	Level 6 Lurker
Trap	XP 250 each

Cunningly hidden loops of rope are hidden in the undergrowth, ready to snare the unwary and hoist them feet first.

Trap: Squares marked with an S contain snares, which tighten around a creature's foot when triggered and release a sapling to drag the snared creature into the air.

Perception

✦ DC 20: The character notices the loop of rope hidden on the ground.

Additional Skill: Nature

✦ DC 24: The character notices a bent tree or branch that provides the "spring" for the snare.

Trigger

The snare attacks when a creature enters or begins its turn in one of the trap's squares.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). While restrained, the target is suspended upside down. *Aftereffect:* The target is knocked prone.

Countermeasures

✦ A restrained target can use the escape action to free itself (DC 18). On a successful escape, the target is not prone.

✦ A restrained target or an adjacent creature can attack the snare's rope (AC /Reflex 10, Fortitude 5; hp 10, vulnerable 5 fire). The restrained target is knocked prone after the rope is destroyed.

Tactics

The werewolf plays the role of the helpful stranger. He assures the party that he's heard the rumors about the mansion and checked them out. You might sprinkle the following quotes into the conversation.

- *"This area is fairly busy. There's lots of game in the abandoned orchard—and predators that hunt them."*
- *"Many hunters and trappers frequent the hill too."*
- *"The mansion at the top of the hill has a sinister reputation. It creaks and groans as the timbers and foundation settles, and there are all sorts of moss-covered statues. It's just the sort of place that gets you jumping at shadows, but there's not a thing up there that's worth anyone's time."*
- *"Yeah, I've been up there. Some nice flowers, vines, and fruit trees still growing, but if you're not picking berries, it's not worth the trip."*
- *"Don't take my word for it. Go see for yourself."*

If the party attacks, or tries to move past the roadblock, the werewolf attacks with his bow from atop the barricade. The dire wolves break out of their concealment and attack the closest character.

The werewolf uses *hunter's quarry* and *prime shot* whenever he can. If the PCs answer his bowshots with ranged attacks of their own, he takes a move action to hunker down behind the barrier, gaining cover. If they climb the barrier or work their way around it, he uses *defensive mobility* to maneuver away, then retreats into the orchard.

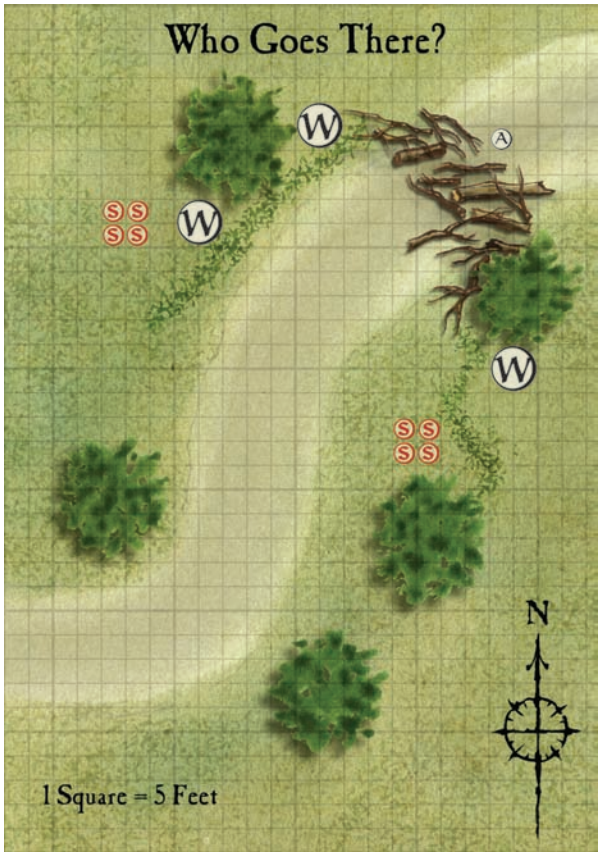
The dire wolves try to surround a target and knock the character prone. If the werewolf retreats, the dire wolves do their best to follow.

After a few rounds of battle, the werewolf moves off the barrier and into the woods, even if the PCs do not enter melee. He heads toward the snares, hoping to lure a few foes into the trap. Both he and the dire wolves know where the snares lie and avoid them easily. The werewolf fights until he is reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, then assumes dire wolf form and tries to flee.

Features of the Area

Barricade: This pile of logs stands about 6 feet high. It provides cover for a creature behind it.

With a DC 15 Athletics check, a creature can hop onto the barricade as part of normal movement; otherwise it costs an extra square of movement to climb onto it. A creature standing atop the barricade gains combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller.



Drive: Packed gravel covers the drive, with weeds poking though. Despite this growth, the gravel shifts and crunches underfoot, imposing a -2 penalty on Athletics and Stealth checks.

Hollows: These dimples in the ground are filled with briars and weeds. A creature can drop prone to gain total concealment; any movement other than crawling negates this concealment.

Trees: These fairly small trees don't hamper movement or block line of sight, but they do provide cover.

Undergrowth: Areas around the drive are choked with plant life. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature can drop prone to gain cover against ranged attacks.

Orchard Ambush

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Setup

If the party decides to travel through the overgrown orchard that covers the slopes of the hill where the mansion lies, they run afoul of a pack of dire wolves and werewolves. These creatures are on the hunt for both food and intruders.

Several small stone outbuildings dot the slopes. These once served as storehouses for harvested fruit, tools, or supplies. The hunting packs use these little buildings as landmarks to monitor their assigned territory. When the PCs happen on one, the hunters aren't far away—and they're quick to attack.

Place the PCs anywhere within 2 squares of the stone building.

This encounter includes the following creatures

2 werewolf lords (L)
7 vicious dire wolves (W)

When the PCs enter the area, read:

A low stone building with a moss-covered roof is sunk into the turf like a boulder. A deep gully near the building snakes away down the hill. A weathered footbridge crosses the gully.

Perception Check

Roll a Perception check (active or passive, as appropriate) for each PC, opposed by one of the vicious dire wolves' Stealth check. Any PC who does not succeed on the check is surprised.

A twig snapping reveals the approach of two groups of hulking wolves, each as big as a horse. With a chorus of snarls, the shaggy canines rush to the attack.

Tactics

The werewolves begin the encounter in dire wolf form. The two groups close on the party as quickly as they can. The dire wolves try to surround, or at least flank, a single character and knock it prone. The werewolves try to maneuver past the party's front line to attack ranged strikers or spellcasters.

The werewolves fight until reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, then try to get away. The dire wolves stay in the fight until both werewolves are defeated or retreat. When the last werewolf leaves the fight, the dire wolves flee.

Features of the Area

Bridge: This small footbridge is made from wooden beams and planks. The structure looks very weathered and perhaps a little rotten. It creaks ominously when anyone sets foot on it, but it's perfectly sturdy.

Building: This stone structure is half buried in the ground. A single door at the western end gives access to the cramped, dank interior.

The eaves of the slate roof are about 2 feet above the ground. The roof slopes upward to a ridge that runs the length of the structure. The roof's peak is about 2 feet higher than the eaves.

2 Werewolf Lords (L)	Level 12 Brute (Leader)
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 700
Initiative +10	**Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision
Call of the Wild aura 5; a lycanthrope ally in the aura (including the werewolf lord) shift 1 square as a minor action.	
HP 154; **Bloodied** 77	
Regeneration 10 (if the werewolf lord takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21	
Immune moon frenzy (see page 53)	
Speed 6 (8 in dire wolf form)	
Action Points 1	
(+) **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage; see also *blood rage*.	
(+) **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Disease**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and contracts moon frenzy (see page 53); see also *blood rage*.	
Blood Rage	
The werewolf lord's melee attacks deal 4 extra damage against a bloodied target.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**	
The werewolf lord can alter its physical form to appear as a dire wolf or a unique human (*MM* 280). It cannot use its bite attack in human form and cannot make greatclub attacks in dire wolf form.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +12, Dungeoneering +14, Insight +14, Intimidate +12, Nature +14, Stealth +15	
Str 24 (+13)	**Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 24 (+13)	**Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, greatclub	

With a DC 10 Athletics check, a creature can hop up on the roof as part of normal movement; otherwise it takes an extra square of movement to clamber up. A creature standing atop the building has combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, the creature must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid slipping on the mossy tiles. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the building, even one occupied by another creature.

7 Vicious Dire Wolves (W)	Level 7 Skirmisher
Large natural beast (mount)	XP 300 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
HP 83; **Bloodied** 41	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18	
Immune moon frenzy (see page 53)	
Speed 8	
(+) **Bite** (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, or 2d8 + 5 damage against a prone target.	
Combat Advantage	
The dire wolf gains combat advantage against a target that has one or more of the dire wolf's allies adjacent to it. If the dire wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.	
Pack Hunter (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at will) ✦ **Mount**	
The dire wolf's rider gains combat advantage against an enemy if it has at least one ally other than its mount adjacent to the target.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 21 (+8)	**Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 19 (+7)	**Int** 5 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+3)

The building provides cover if line of effect or line of sight for an attack passes through the roof's ridge, even when a creature is standing on the roof.

Gully: This feature is 25 feet deep and choked with briars. A fall into the gully deals 2d10 damage. The gully's walls are steep and crumbling, requiring a DC 25 Athletics check to climb out.

Trees: These fairly small trees don't hamper movement or block line of sight, but they do provide cover.

Undergrowth: Only areas with dense foliage are shown on the map. They are choked with weeds, fallen branches, and saplings. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature can drop prone to gain cover; any movement other than crawling negates this cover.

Welcoming Committee

Encounter Level 13 (3,800 XP)

Setup

Jaccobux long ago turned the statues decorating the mansion's front entrance into deadly, animated guardians. With the arrival of Cali and her allies, Jaccobux expects trouble, so he has ordered the statues to attack nearly anything that approaches the building. Creatures can leave through the front door without trouble, but they activate the statues if even one of them approaches again.

Place the PCs at the western edge of the map on the drive.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

2 grasping statue (G)
4 leaping statues (L)

In addition, the werewolf archer from area 17 in the mansion might join the fight (see "Development" below).

To avoid triggering the statues, the PCs must either look like wolves or werewolves or speak a pass phrase, typically a poem or a historical passage. (For example, you might choose a stanza from "The Charge of the Light Brigade," perhaps with ballistae standing in for cannons.) Jaccobux changes the pass phrase daily.

If the PCs have defeated any werewolves from the previous tactical encounters, they might have recovered a document containing pass phrases. However, they have no way to tell which one is in effect for today, though they can recite one at random and hope for the best.

When the party approaches the mansion, read:

The weed-covered drive loops around a massive tree whose trailing branches overspread the whole area. Downslope from the tree lies the tangled orchard that covers the hill. Opposite the orchard rises the swaybacked bulk of a once-grand house. Cracked, sagging stairs rise perhaps 10 feet to a pair of weather-beaten doors flanked by filthy windows. A pair of moss-covered statues stand on the ground, one on each side of the stairs. Five more statues stand beneath the ancient tree.

If the party approaches the front door without speaking the correct pass phrase, read:

Without warning, the tree's furrowed bark twists itself into the semblance of a gaping mouth. "The unlettered are unwelcome here," the mouth intones in Common. "Withdraw, or perish."

If the party lingers, even for a moment, read:

With a sound like a whole hillside giving way, the statues step menacingly off their pedestals.

If the party withdraws, nothing happens.

Tactics

The grasping statue moves toward the largest group of characters. When it gets close enough to make a melee attack, it slams and grabs the target with the heaviest armor. While it holds a foe, it attacks anyone within reach and slides the target to break up flanking or moves into a position where the leaping statues can attack it.

The leaping statues fight on the move, using *skirmish* to deal extra damage. They also try to block the door to the mansion, leaping on and off the stairs. They target foes who approach the door with melee attacks but turn their hand crossbows against any who hang back from the front line.

Development

The statues break off the attack if the party leaves area 1, unless PCs enter the mansion. In that case, the statues pursue and keep attacking.

If a combat here lasts more than 3 rounds, or if the PCs use any loud or flashy powers, the werewolf archer from area 17 is alerted. He briefly looks into area 18 to warn Jaccobux about the intrusion, then

2 Grasping Statues (G)	**Level 13 Controller**
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 800
Initiative +7	**Senses** Perception +7; dark vision
Verdant Grasp aura 2; enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain	
HP 123; **Bloodied** 61	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and at the grasping statue's option, the target slides 1 square or is grabbed (until escape). A target trying to escape the grab takes a –4 penalty to the check. The grasping statue can slide or grab only Large or smaller targets. The statue can grab up to two targets at once but, if it does so, it cannot make slam attacks until it releases at least one target.	
Threatening Reach	
A grasping statue can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 21 (+11)	**Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+7)
Con 21 (+11)	**Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+6)

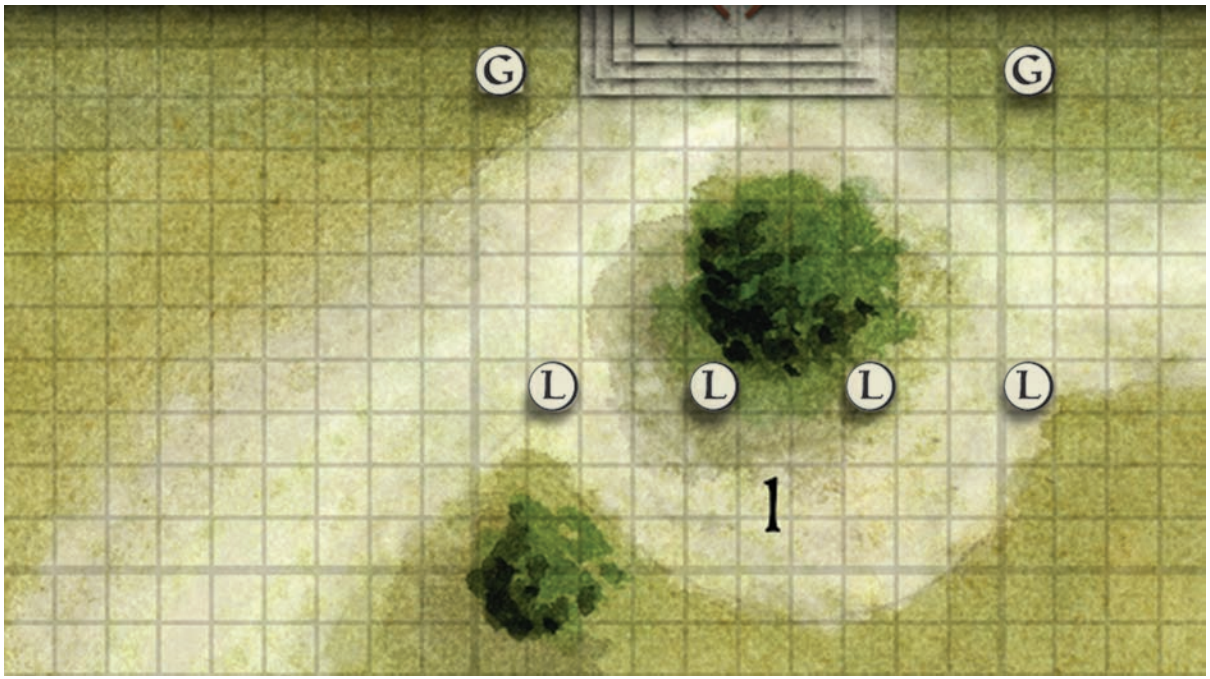
4 Leaping Statues (L)	Level 10 Skirmishers
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 500 each
Initiative +11	**Senses** Perception +7; dark vision
HP 105; **Bloodied** 52	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 8	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
Before it makes a slam attack, the leaping statue can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
⚔ **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 10/20; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
Agile Skirmisher	
A leaping statue gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks that its movement triggers.	
Melee Agility (minor, after hitting with a melee attack; at will)	
The leaping statue shifts 1 square.	
Skirmish +2d6	
If, on its turn, the leaping statue ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 2d6 damage with its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 18 (+9)	**Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 17 (+8)	**Int** 3 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+5)

moves to area 2 and begins sniping at the PCs from the windows there.

Features of the Area

Drive: Packed gravel covers the drive, with weeds poking though. Despite this growth, the gravel shifts and crunches underfoot, imposing a –2 penalty on Athletics and Stealth checks.

Trees: Only the area's biggest trees are shown on the map. The trees block movement, though creatures can climb them (Athletics DC 15). The trees' rounded trunks allow creatures to cross the corners of their spaces, but an entire square provides cover when line of effect passes through a corner. A creature has total cover and concealment when line of effect and line of sight pass through the tree's space.



Undergrowth: Areas surrounding the drive are choked with weeds, fallen branches, and saplings. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature can drop prone to gain cover; any movement other than crawling negates this cover.

Heavy Traffic

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Setup

This encounter takes place if the party enters the stable (area 13). An animated carriage is stored here and, like the statues, is programmed to stop intruders.

The carriage attacks immediately if anyone enters through either of the double doors to the south. These doors are animated and automatically open when any creature, alive or not, approaches. If the party enters through the door to the west, the carriage doesn't attack unless someone moves within 10 feet of it.

This encounter includes the following creature:

Animated carriage (C)

When the carriage attacks, read:

The carriage seems to come to life in an instant. Creaking and pitching like a ship in a storm, the vehicle rears up on its rear wheels. Its front wheels spin crazily, and the long wooden tongue attached to them whips about like a wicked tentacle.

Tactics

The carriage attacks as many enemies as it can (at least three) with its *trample* power and makes a slam attack at the end of its move. If two characters are within reach, it spends an action point to attack each of them. If necessary, it exits through one sent of double doors and enters again through the other. If it can't trample three or more characters, it uses *rumbling charge* instead.

The carriage is too big to enter most of the stalls, but it can reach inside to make a slam attack. It is strong enough to burst through their walls (DC 20) if necessary to make an attack.

Animated Carriage (C)	**Level 12 Solo Brute**
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 3,500 each
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 765; **Bloodied** 382	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22	
Immune disease, poison, sleep; **Resist** 5 to all damage	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 12	
Action 2	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d6 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).	
⸸ **Rumbling Charge**	
The animated carriage makes a charge attack; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.	
⸸ **Trample** (standard; at-will)	
The animated carriage can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the carriage must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the carriage makes a trample attack: +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⸸ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)	
The animated carriage makes a slam attack and either a *rumbling charge* or a *trample* attack (in any order), or makes two slam attacks.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 22 (+12)	**Dex** 9 (+5) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 23 (+12)	**Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+2)

The carriage doesn't chase the party into the mansion, but it pursues any PCs who flee outside.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The stable has no windows. The open double doors provide dim light with a radius of 5 squares.

Ceilings: The ceilings are 18 feet high, except in the loft (see below).

Doors: The western door is as stout as the exterior doors on the southern wall.

Ladders: These lead up 12 feet to the loft. It takes a DC 0 Athletics check to climb a ladder.

Loft: A storage area for hay and straw runs along the west and north walls; the dotted line on the map shows the loft's edges. The loft's floor is 12 feet up, and its ceiling is 10 feet above that. Two ladders give access to the loft.

The loft's wooden floor has a break DC of 25.

Walls: Most of the interior walls are 10 feet high. The 5-foot-long section that fronts each stall is only 4 feet high, however, which allows most characters to reach over it. A character standing behind one of these low walls has cover.

The walls of the stalls are wooden, about 3 inches thick. They have a break DC of 20.

Development

Although a fight here might generate a great deal of noise, the denizens of the mansion aren't likely to notice the ruckus. If the PCs flee battle here and head toward areas 1 or 14, they might activate the guardians there.

Rearguard

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Setup

Jaccobux has also animated the garden statues near the mansion's rear entrance and commanded them to attack intruders. Creatures can leave through the back door without trouble, but they activate the statues if even one of them approaches again.

This encounter takes place if the party attempts to come at the mansion through the garden (area 14). Place the PCs at the southern edge of the map.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

3 guardian statues (G)
2 archer statues (A)

In addition, the werewolf archer from area 17 in the mansion might join the fight (see "Development" below).

To avoid triggering the statues, the PCs must look like undead creatures. Jaccobux has not provided a pass phrase for the back door, but he has performed a warning Magic Mouth ritual there.

If the party approaches the back of the mansion, read:

The bulk of the mansion looms over a garden gone wild with creeping vines, tall weeds, and disheveled ornamental trees. Here and there, mossy statues and stone benches stand in the shade.

At ground level stands a pair of doors, pockmarked by the elements and wreathed in masses of ivy. Traces of a brick patio are faintly visible though the weeds and moss that blanket the ground. A few fresh-looking ivy leaves lie atop the detritus.

As the party nears the back door, read:

The doors' rain-streaked surface abruptly comes alive, forming a toothless mouth. "Stop!" it commands in Common. "Take not one step closer. Go in peace, or die as an enemy."

If the party lingers, even for a moment, read:

The moss-covered statues suddenly shift and step menacingly off their pedestals.

If the party withdraws, nothing happens.

Tactics

The guardian statues move as quickly as they can toward the interlopers, attacking PCs closest to the back door while keeping themselves between their foes and the archer statues. They use *martial expertise* as soon as they can and their other powers whenever applicable.

The archer statues use *rain of arrows* as soon as they activate, attacking as many different foes as they can. After that, each targets a different foe with *impaling shot*. Once they've expended these powers, they keep up a steady fire, keeping their distance with *not so close*. If their other powers recharge, they use them as soon as they can; if both become available at the same time, they use *impaling shot* first.

Features of the Area

Benches: These slabs of stone stand about 3 feet high. They have concave tops for more comfortable seating, but the depressions are filled with rainwater and years of accumulated scum.

With a DC 10 Athletics check, a creature can hop up on a bench as part of normal movement; otherwise it takes an extra square of movement to clamber up. A creature standing atop a bench has combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, the creature must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid slipping on the scum and falling off. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the bench, even one occupied by another creature.

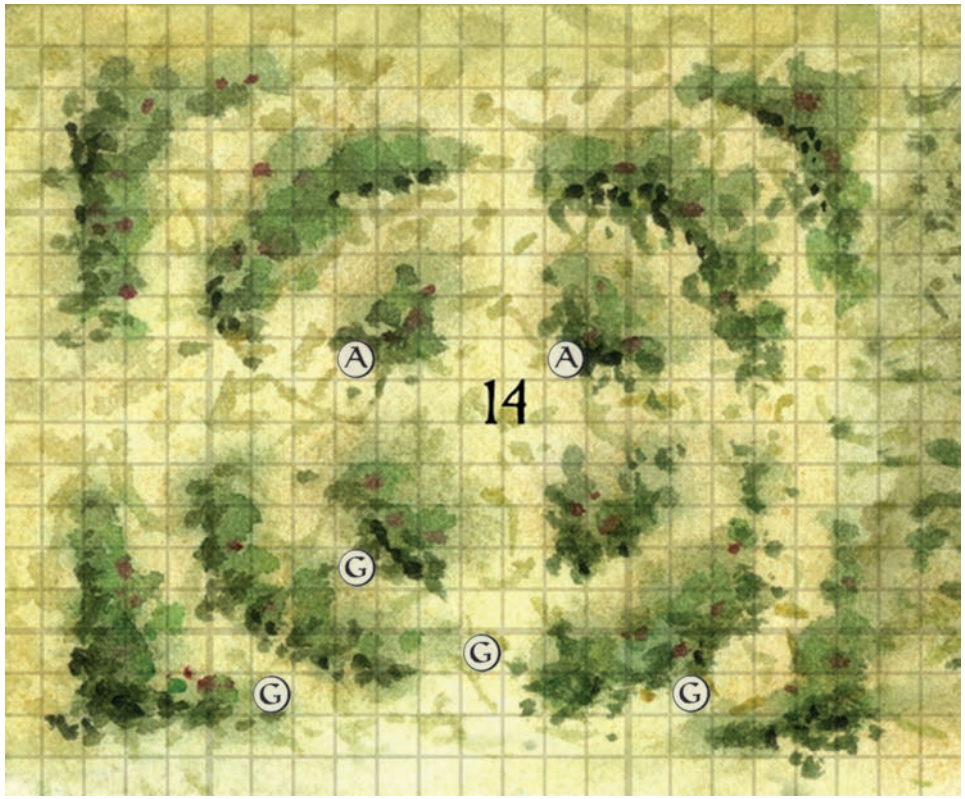
2 Archer Statues (A)	**Level 12 Artillery**
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 700 each
Initiative +11	**Senses** Perception +7
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
➳ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 20/40; +19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
➳ **Impaling Shot** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Weapon**	
Requires longbow; ranged 20; +22 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the statue makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +20 vs. Fortitude; the target is restrained (save ends).	
➳ **Rain of Arrows** (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Weapon**	
The archer statue makes three longbow attacks, each with a -2 penalty to the attack roll.	
Not So Close (immediate reaction, when an enemy makes a melee attack against the archer statue; encounter)	
The archer statue shifts 1 square and makes a ranged attack against the enemy.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 17 (+9)	**Dex** 21 (+11)	**Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 18 (+10)	**Int** 3 (+2)	**Cha** 10 (+6)

3 Guardian Statues (G)	Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 700 each
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +7	
HP 122; **Bloodied** 61	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
⨺ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will)	
+19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
Reactive Strike (immediate reaction, when an enemy leaves an adjacent square; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
The guardian statue makes a melee basic attack against an enemy, even if the enemy is shifting.	
Martial Expertise (free, when the guardian statue misses with a melee attack; recharges when the statue uses *expert strike*) ✦ **Weapon**	
The guardian statue makes another melee attack against the same target.	
Expert Strike	
If the guardian statue hits with an opportunity attack, the target is also knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+7)	
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+6)	

Garden: The ground in these areas is very soft and covered with sturdy vines, making it difficult terrain.

Trees: These fairly small trees don't hamper movement or block line of sight, but they do provide cover.

Undergrowth: Areas surrounding the drive are choked with weeds, fallen branches, and saplings. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature can drop prone to gain cover; any movement other than crawling negates this cover.



Development

The statues break off the attack if the party leaves area 14, unless PCs enter the mansion. In that case, the statues pursue and keep attacking.

If a combat here lasts more than 2 rounds, of if the PCs use any loud or flashy powers, Jaccobux notices the fight. He might fire off a *magic missile* or two from the windows in area 18 if he thinks he can do so without being noticed. More likely, he calls the werewolf archer from area 17, who begins sniping at the party from the windows.

Amazing Graves

Encounter Level 12 (3,400 XP)

Setup

This encounter takes place if the party ventures into the hedge maze behind the mansion (area 15). A group of ghouls lurks here, standing guard over the mausoleum (area 16).

The ghouls hide near the center of the maze, concealed by the hedges. Place the PCs near the edge of the map, beside whichever entrance brought them here.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 abyssal ghoul pack leader (A)
4 greater ghouls (G)

Stealth Check
The ghouls hide in the hedges, watching and listening for intruders. Make a Stealth check for each PC, opposed by the ghoul leader's active Perception check. If the ghouls hear the PCs coming, they attack when the party approaches the center of the maze, gaining surprise.

Perception Check
If the ghouls don't notice the PCs' approach, they must wait until the party comes into view. Roll a Perception check (active or passive, as appropriate) for the PC closest to the ghouls opposed by one of the greater ghouls' Stealth check. The ghoul gets a +5 bonus to the check for careful preparation. If the PC spots the ghoul, the party achieves surprise. Otherwise, the ghouls surprise the party.

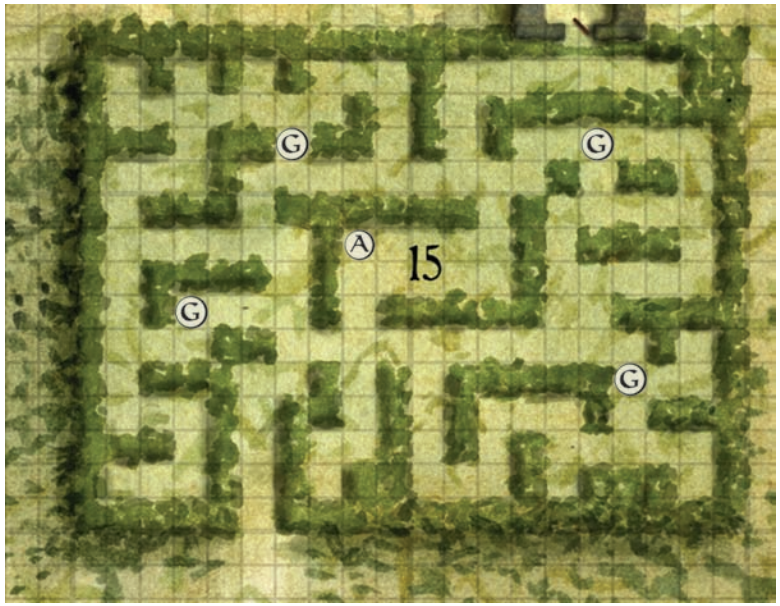
When the ghouls attack, read:

The towering hedges here open into a narrow space covered with springy turf and blooming flowers.

The scene quickly loses its charm, however, when a group of half-naked, pallid humanoids with nearly fleshless bodies emerge from the surrounding hedge. There's a charnel smell about them as they hiss and advance, clawed hands outstretched.

Tactics

The greater ghouls move into melee as quickly as they can. While they keep the party locked in combat, the pack leader attacks a spellcaster or another



4 Greater Ghouls (G)	**Level 10 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 500 each
Initiative +11	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
Sepulchral Stench aura 3; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.	
HP 103; **Bloodied** 51	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Speed 8, climb 4	
⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)	
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). If the target is a living creature that is already immobilized, stunned, or unconscious, the bite deals an extra 2d6 damage.	
⸸ **Ghoulish Bite** (standard; at-will)	
Target must be immobilized, stunned, or unconscious; +15 vs. AC; 3d6 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Stealth + 14	
Str 14 (+7)	**Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 15 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Abyssal Ghoul Pack Leader (A) Level 12 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)		
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 1,400
Initiative +14	**Senses** Perception +8; darkvision	
Sepulchral Stench aura 3; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.		
HP 248; **Bloodied** 124; see also *dead blood*		
AC 28; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 21		
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8, climb 4		
Action Points 1		
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) +17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). If the target is a living creature that is already immobilized, stunned, or unconscious, the bite deals an extra 2d6 damage.		
✧ **Dead Blood** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Necrotic** Close burst 1; all enemies in the burst take 10 necrotic damage.		
↯ **Offensive Shift** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves within 2 squares of the abyssal ghoul and attacks an ally of the abyssal ghoul; recharges when first bloodied) The abyssal ghoul shifts and make a melee basic attack against the enemy.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Skills Stealth + 17		
Str 24 (+13)	**Dex** 22 (+12)	**Wis** 15 (+8)
Con 20 (+11)	**Int** 16 (+9)	**Cha** 10 (+6)

dangerous-looking character. The leader tries to position itself to bring its *offensive shift* power into play.

Features of the Area

Hedges: The maze walls are formed from mounds of earth about a foot high, with dense foliage 12 feet high growing on top. The hedges block line of sight and line of effect.

Through the hedges are very thick and strong, a creature can force its way through them. It takes 2 squares of movement and a DC 25 Strength check to push through a hedge square. A failed check ends the creature's movement for the turn, leaving it inside the hedge square; a creature can stop voluntarily in a hedge. A creature inside a hedge gains both concealment (treat as heavily obscured terrain) and cover but is effectively restrained, except that it can move to exit the square.

With a DC 20 Athletics check, a creature can climb a hedge, though the branches tend to droop. (The ghouls can use their climb speeds to cross the hedges without checks.) It costs 4 squares of movement to climb over a hedge. A creature can stop atop a hedge, gaining combat advantage against foes standing on the ground. However, the creature must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid falling off. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the hedge, even one occupied by another creature.

Paths: Packed gravel covers the paths, with weeds poking though. Despite this growth, the gravel shifts and crunches underfoot, imposing a -2 penalty on Athletics and Stealth checks.

Development

The vampires in the mausoleum (area 16) hear any fighting in the maze and are prepared when the characters enter that area. If the PCs engage the vampires before defeating the ghouls here, the ghouls move to join the fight.

Murder in the Mausoleum

Encounter Level 11 (2,700 XP)

Setup

This encounter takes place if the PCs approach the mausoleum (area 16). Ancient, spreading trees shade the building and allow the vampires that nest here to stay active around the clock.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

Cali, vampire lord (C)
12 vampire spawn bloodhunters

In addition, the ghouls from the hedge maze (area 15) might be here if the party has not yet dealt with them. See "Development."

Most of the vampires are resting in their coffins. Two vampire spawn hide under the hedge near the mausoleum entrance, which is hidden in a false hedge. They warn Cali and the others when they detect intruders (which might be from the sounds of battle with the ghouls).

The vampires' coffins rest in the top tier of niches in the mausoleum walls. The vampires can exit the niches either through the mausoleum's interior (in which case they move through the door to join the fight), or by pushing back loose stone blocks in the outer walls.

The vampires wait for the best moment to attack, hidden behind their illusory hedge. They have total concealment until they make their move, likely surprising the party.

When the vampires decide to attack, read:

The verdant foliage here rustles and disgorges a swarm of feral humanoids with wicked-looking, feline eyes.

Tactics

The vampires take advantage of their climb speeds to swarm the party. Some exit through the outer walls and crawl over the hedges or across the walls and roof of the building, attempting to surround or flank PCs.

The spawn simply attack the nearest target, clawing rabidly. Cali finds a fairly safe location (such as the roof of the mausoleum) and uses *dominating gaze*, preferably against a defender or striker. After that, she enters melee and attacks with her short sword at a target she has combat advantage against, using *deft strike* when possible. She uses *imperiling strike* and focuses on that target, draining blood when she can, or targets a foe with *dominating gaze* again if the power recharges.

The spawn fight until destroyed. Cali keeps fighting until five or fewer spawn remain. When that happens, she assumes *mist form* and flees into the mausoleum, where she can make her way to area 18 of the mansion through the network of dry pipes.

Features of the Area

Door: The mausoleum's door is completely hidden behind the false hedge (see below). The door is bronze and locked but can be opened from the inside without a key (The Kinceps were a little worried about being buried alive). Jaccobux and Cali each have a key.

A DC 25 Strength check is required to break down the door. The Thievery DC to pick the lock is 22.

False Hedge: The 15-foot-long section of hedge in front of the mausoleum's door looks just like the rest of the hedges in the maze, but it is actually hollow. Anyone standing inside the false hedge has total

Cali, Vampire Lord (C)	**Level 11 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 1,200

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
Sepulchral Stench aura 3; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.
HP 248; **Bloodied** 124; see also *dead blood*
AC 28; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 21
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb)
Action Points 1

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 8 damage.

Deft Strick (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
Cali moves up to 2 squares and makes a short sword attack; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 10 damage.

Imperiling Strike (standard; encounter)
+15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 10 damage, and the target takes a -3 penalty to AC and Reflex defenses until the end of Cali's next turn.

Blood Drain (standard; encounter; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ✦ **Healing**
Requires combat advantage; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 8 damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and Cali regains 46 hit points; see also *combat advantage*.

Dominating Gaze (minor; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 5; +13 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty on the saving throw). *Aftereffect:* The target is dazed (save ends). Cali can dominate only one creature at a time.

Combat Advantage
Cali deals an extra 3d6 damage with her attacks against any target she has combat advantage against.

Mist Form (standard; encounter) ✦ **Polymorph**
Cali becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 12, but cannot make attacks. Cali can remain in mist form for up to 1 hour or end the effect as a minor action.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ✦ **Healing**
Cali spends a healing surge and regains 46 hit points. She gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of her next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +13, Bluff +13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +15, Thievery +15

Str 16 (+8)	**Dex** 20 (+10)	**Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 13 (+6)	**Int** 12 (+6)	**Cha** 16 (+8)

Equipment leather armor, short sword

12 Vampire Spawn Bloodhunters		Level 10 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 125 each
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22		
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)		
Action Points 1		
⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**		
+16 vs. AC; 6 necrotic damage (8 necrotic damage against a bloodied target).		
Destroyed by Sunlight		
A vampire spawn that begins its turn in direct sunlight can take only a single move action on its turn. If it ends the turn in direct sunlight, it burns to ash and is destroyed.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common	
Str 14 (+7)	**Dex** 16 (+8)	**Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 14 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+5)	**Cha** 14 (+7)

concealment against those outside but can see out; a creature outside has concealment against a viewer inside the hedge.

The false hedge does not impair movement. Creatures can't climb on the false hedge (they fall through).

Hedges: The maze walls are formed from mounds of earth about a foot high, with dense foliage 12 feet high growing on top. The hedges block line of sight and line of effect.

Through the hedges are very thick and strong, a creature can force its way through them. It takes 2 squares of movement and a DC 25 Strength check to push through a hedge square. A failed check ends the creature's movement for the turn, leaving it inside the hedge square; a creature can stop voluntarily in a hedge. A creature inside a hedge gains both concealment (treat as heavily obscured terrain) and cover but is effectively restrained, except that it can move to exit the square.

With a DC 20 Athletics check, a creature can climb a hedge, though the branches tend to droop. (The vampires can use their climb speeds to cross the hedges without checks.) It costs 4 squares of movement to climb over a hedge. A creature can stop atop a hedge, gaining combat advantage against foes standing on the ground. However, the creature must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid falling off. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the hedge, even one occupied by another creature.

Paths: Packed gravel covers the paths, with weeds poking though. Despite this growth, the gravel shifts and crunches underfoot, imposing a –2 penalty on Athletics and Stealth checks.

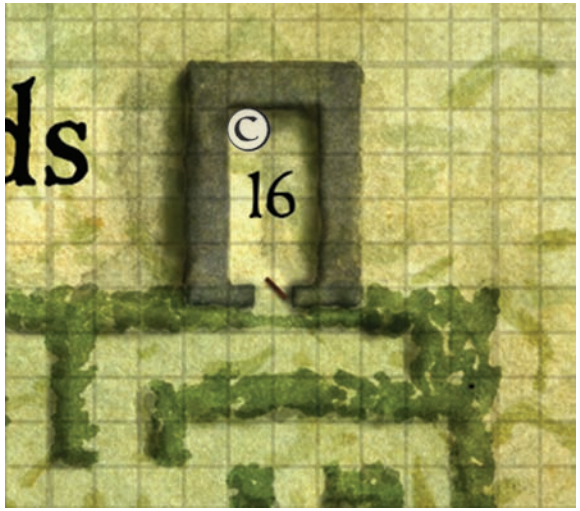
Trees: Only the area's biggest trees are shown on the map. The trees block movement, though creatures can climb them (Athletics DC 15). The trees' rounded trunks allow creatures to cross the corners of their spaces, but an entire square provides cover when line of effect passes through a corner. A creature has total cover and concealment when line of effect and line of sight pass through the tree's space.

The trees' thick canopies are not shown on the map but block sunlight. The area below is dimly lit during the day, allowing the vampires to act safely.

Roof: The mausoleum's pitched roof is made of thick timbers and covered with slate shingles. It's very slick and requires a DC 25 Athletics check to traverse.

A creature standing atop the roof has combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, the creature must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid slipping on the mossy tiles. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the hedge, even one occupied by another creature, and takes 2d10 damage.

The roof provides cover if line of effect or line of sight for an attack passes through the roof's ridge, even when a creature is standing on the roof.



Walls: The mausoleum's walls are 5 feet thick and made of hewn stone. They have a break DC of 43. The walls rise 18 feet to the eaves of the roof and require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Each square of the wall (except those at the corners) has two loose blocks that effectively work as secret doors. One is at ground level, and the second is about 12 feet up. A creature can crawl through the loose block, treating the wall square as difficult terrain unless it is Small. A DC 25 Perception check is required to locate a loose block. To slide a block out takes a DC 20 Strength check from the outside, or a DC 10 check from inside.

Development

The ghouls from the hedge maze (area 15) join the battle here if the PCs engage the vampires first. If Cali escapes, she flees to the library (area 18) and warns Jaccobux of the intruders.

In the Library

Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Setup

When the party finally reaches the library, they meet Jaccobux, the mansion's ghost. He spends all his time here, engrossed in his books.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

Jaccobux (J)
1 shield guardian (S)
1 guardian statue (G)
1 leaping statue (L)

In addition, the werewolf archer from the balcony (area 17) might be here if the party has not yet dealt with him. Cali the vampire lord might have retreated here from the mausoleum as well.

When the party enters the library, read:

The door opens to reveal a lofty room lined with tall windows. The air feels warm and comfortable, and it carries the scents of dust and parchment. A long table covered with a deep green cloth (fading to yellow in spots) stands before the entrance. Dozens and dozens of books and scrolls lie heaped on it. A pair of statues flanks the table.

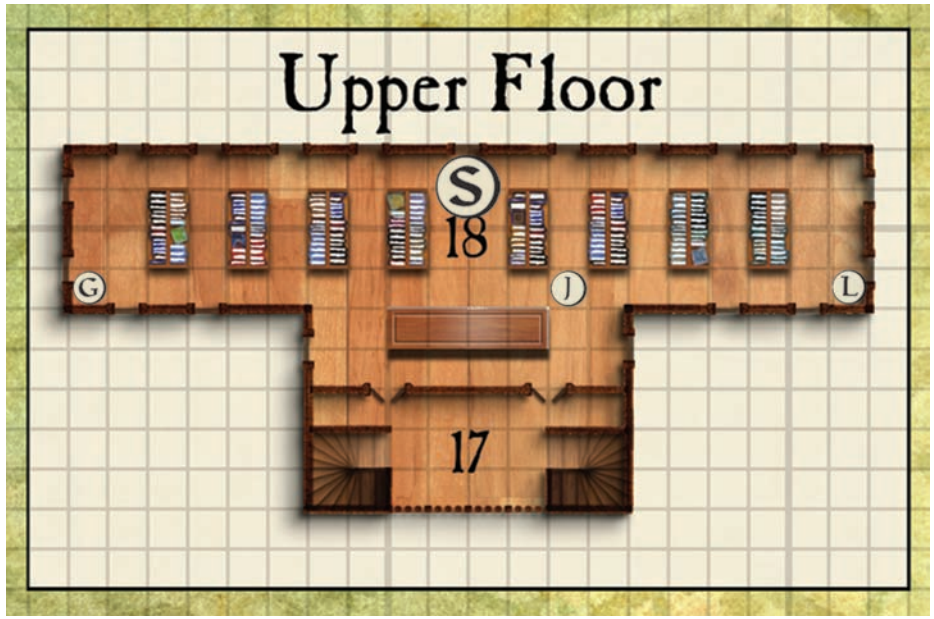
Hovering in the air near the table is a balding man holding a book in his gnarled hands. Several more books float nearby. Behind the man is a row of bookshelves, which brim with many more dusty tomes. A bulky figure of wood, metal, and stone stands beside them, near the floating man.

"Hush!" The man hisses. "I'm translating."

Tactics

Jaccobux would much rather keep reading than talk to the PCs, let alone fight them. If attacked, he uses *terrifying shriek*, trying to shove characters out a window or onto the balcony (area 17) and from there into a stairwell or over the railing. He then casts *Bigby's icy grasp* on the foe giving him the most trouble and sustains the spell against that target for as long as he can. After that, he alternates *death's visage* and his remaining spells, aimed at anyone who has damaged him. He uses *terrifying shriek* again whenever it recharges. If attacks hit him twice or more, he bolsters his defenses with *blur*. All the while, he expresses his bafflement at the aggressive behavior of the PCs—why would they want to attack a harmless scholar? He's more than willing to cease hostilities and talk things out—unless the party has damaged any of his books. It such a case, he goes berserk and uses an action point to make multiple attacks against the destructive character.

Jaccobux's shield guardian moves adjacent to him as quickly as it can, to help keep its master from being flanked. It might leave his side to attack foes if none are close by, but it always keeps Jaccobux inside its *shield other* aura. The guardian statue uses similar tactics, except that it might venture farther away from Jaccobux to attack foes and to bring its powers into



Guardian Statue (G)	**Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 700
Initiative +10	**Senses** Perception +7
HP 122; **Bloodied** 61	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Speed 6	
(+) **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
Reactive Strike (immediate reaction, when an enemy leaves an adjacent square; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
The guardian statue makes a melee basic attack against an enemy, even if the enemy is shifting.	
Martial Expertise (free, when the guardian statue misses with a melee attack; recharges when the statue uses *expert strike*) ✦ **Weapon**	
The guardian statue makes another melee attack against the same target.	
Expert Strike	
If the guardian statue hits with an opportunity attack, the target is also knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 21 (+11)	**Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 18 (+10)	**Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+6)

Jaccobux Kincep, Ghost (J) **Level 12 Elite Artillery**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 1,400

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
HP 182; **Bloodied** 91
AC 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Saving Throws +2
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing
Action Points 1

Spirit Touch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage.

Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ✦ **Arcane, Force, Implement**
Requires wand; ranged 20; +19 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 3 force damage (crit 3d6 + 14).

Death's Visage (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**
Requires wand; ranged 5; +15 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Terrifying Shriek (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares and is immobilized (save ends).

Color Spray (standard; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Implement, Radiant**
Requires wand; close blast 5; +19 vs. Will; 1d6 + 6 radiant damage (crit 3d6 + 12), and the target is dazed until the end of Jaccobux's next turn.

Spectral Ram (standard; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Force, Implement**
Requires wand; ranged 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 force damage (crit 3d6 + 26), and target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

Wand of Accuracy (free; encounter) ✦ **Implement**
Requires wand; Jaccobux gains a +2 bonus to a single attack roll.

Blur (minor; daily) ✦ **Arcane, Illusion**
Until the end of the encounter, Jaccobux gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses, and enemies 5 or more squares away cannot see him.

Bigby's Icy Grasp (standard; sustain minor; daily) ✦ **Arcane, Cold, Conjuration, Implement**
Requires wand; ranged 20; Jaccobux conjures a 5-foot tall hand of ice in an unoccupied square within range, and the hand attacks one target adjacent to it; +19 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 cold damage (crit 3d6 + 22) and the target is grabbed (until escape, DC 23). As a move action, Jaccobux can move the hand up to 6 squares.
When Jaccobux sustains the hand, a target it has grabbed takes 1d8 + 6 cold damage. As a standard action, Jaccobux can attack another target with the hand, but it must release a target it has grabbed.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Primordial
Skills Arcana +14
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 13 (+7) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 17 (+9)
Equipment *+3 magic wand*

Leaping Statue (L) **Level 10 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct) XP 500

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
HP 105; **Bloodied** 52
AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22
Immune disease, poison, sleep
Speed 8

Slam (standard; at-will)
Before it makes a slam attack, the leaping statue can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

Agile Skirmisher
A leaping statue gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks that its movement triggers.

Melee Agility (minor, after hitting with a melee attack; at-will)
The leaping statue shifts 1 square.

Skirmish +2d6
If, on its turn, the leaping statue ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 2d6 damage with its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Jump +14
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 3 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+5)

Shield Guardian (S) **Level 14 Soldier**
Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision
Shield Other aura 2; as long as Jaccobux is within the aura, the shield guardian grants Jaccobux a +2 bonus to all defenses and takes half of Jaccobux's damage until it is destroyed.
HP 138; **Bloodied** 69
AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 27
Immune charm, disease, fear, poison, sleep
Speed 4

Slam (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 10 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+10)
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 7 (+5) **Cha** 9 (+6)

play. The leaping statue fights on the move, taking advantage of *skirmish* whenever it can.

The werewolf archer, if present, stays in human form and tries to fight from a distance with its bow. It uses much the same tactics as the werewolf archer in the "Who Goes There?" tactical encounter (page 54), assuming dire wolf form and fleeing if reduced to 20 hit points or below.

Cali, if present, uses the same tactics as in the "Murder in the Mausoleum" tactical encounter (page 65). She is not about to wait around for the party to turn Jaccobux against her and attempts to dominate anyone who strikes up a conversation with the ghost.

After a few rounds of that, Jaccobux gets annoyed and orders her off the property. He prefers to let the party deal with the vampire, but he eventually joins the attack if things are going badly for the PCs.

Features of the Area

Bookshelves: These are 10 feet high and crammed with books. They block movement, line of effect, and line of sight.

As a standard action, a creature can push over a bookshelf with a DC 25 Strength check. A fallen shelf covers an area 2 squares on a side. Any creature in a square the shelf falls in is subject to a melee attack: +15 vs. Reflex; 3d6 damage, and the target is grabbed until escape (DC 15).

A fallen shelf creates difficult terrain in the squares it covers.

Table: This heavy library table its made from thick wood (break DC 22). It's about 4 feet high and covered with a linen cloth that trails almost to the floor on all sides. Books and papers are piled in an unsteady heap atop the table to a depth of nearly 2 feet.

With a DC 20 Athletics check, a creature can leap up on the table; otherwise it takes 2 squares of movement to clamber up. A creature standing atop the table gaining combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, the creature must make a DC 25 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid stumbling over the books and papers. If the check fails, that creature lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the hedge, even one occupied by another creature.

The table is as crammed with junk underneath as it is on top. A creature of Medium size or smaller can crawl under it and gain cover, but the junk makes these squares difficult terrain. Among the junk under the table is Cali's backup coffin.

A character can make a DC 15 Strength check to tip over the table, which then grants superior cover.

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of *Dragon® Magazine* for many years. Skip was a co-designer of the D&D® 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the 3rd Edition *Monster Manual®*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

HEROIC
1–10

The Last Breaths of Ashenport

by Ari Marmell
illustrations by Ryan Barger and Francis Tsai
cartography by Mike Schley

IT STANDS A LONELY VIGIL atop a remote northern shore, hunkered down against the terrible ocean storms. For most of the year, it sits alone, for trade in the region has decreased. If this were any other town, it would long since have been forgotten, or perhaps even abandoned.

But this is no other village. This is Ashenport. Here, the fish are plentiful. Here, the crops grow and thrive despite the rocky soil. Here, the ocean offers up its riches willingly, like a bashful lover.

And here, now, as the storms roll in and the tide drops to its lowest ebb, the time has come once again for Ashenport to repay that favor. They offer their prayers. They offer their veneration. And they offer the blood and the flesh and the souls of those whom they have lured to their isolated town. For their patron is none other than Father Dagon, Abyssal Prince of the Deep, and in payment for his beneficence, he accepts nothing less.

"The Last Breaths of Ashenport" is an adventure of survival and alien horrors for 8th-level PCs. The adventure is self-contained and can be placed in any setting. "The Last Breaths of Ashenport" is heavily influenced by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft.

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Adventure Background

Ashenport should have died a generation ago, as did the other towns along this rocky coast. When the local priests could offer the townsfolk no hope, they turned to a darker patron, guided by several of their eldest citizens who remembered older, bloodier ways.

Ever since, the people of Ashenport have dwelt, if not in luxury, then at least in comfort. Fishing, hunting, and farming are easy. Sunken treasures appear regularly in shallow waters. A trade route long fallen into obscurity has begun once again to show traces of life.

But the Prince of the Depths gives nothing for free. Every autumn, at the lowest tide, the dark waters beyond Ashenport sing a terrible song. The sea resounds with Dagon's Call, a mystical summons that compels all who hear it—save for Dagon's own worshipers—to march into the sea and allow themselves to drown. The souls of the lost go to feed Dagon's ravenous hunger, while their bodies are infused with his essence, mutating into ichthyic horrors.

That time has come again. Travelers, few though they are, converge on the town, attracted by any number of rumors and announcements. The storms move in, ensuring that those on the road must take shelter at Ashenport, and those already present cannot leave. Nothing now remains but for Dagon's cultists to let the sea claim its due.

Nothing, of course, except the presence of a few strangers for whom the townsfolk are unprepared . . .

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive in the middle of a truly horrific storm. After taking shelter in the local inn, they experience Dagon's Call during their first night. Afterward, the town appears

Alien Horrors and Familiar Faces

One of the conceits of "The Last Breaths of Ashenport" is that the various creatures the PCs face are truly alien in form. They are fish-men formed from sacrifices to Dagon; slithering horrors from the deepest seas of the Abyss; and ancient creatures the likes of which no living mortal has seen.

Of course, Dungeons & Dragons has more than enough strange and twisted monsters to fit the bill, but if you're to truly capture the intended feel of the adventure, it's important to play up the appearance and alien natures of these creatures, rather than to focus on the mechanics. It might sound like a minor point, but the proper use—and, just as important, the careful avoidance—of particular terms can go a long way toward making the PCs, and indeed the players, feel like they're truly facing the unknown.

Along similar lines, the use of some metagame techniques can greatly enhance the feel of horror adventures in general, and of an "alien-horror/Lovecraftian" adventure in particular. The easiest element to change for the session is one of lighting. Don't dim the lights to the point where it's difficult to read the sheet in front of you or anything that drastic; just try not to play in a room that's too brightly lit.

More than that, though, this sort of horror is about unfamiliarity as much as it is more visceral fears. Something as mundane as changing up the setup of the furniture, or the order in which the players sit around the table—minor as they might seem—can add a bit to the sense of strangeness.

And of course, music is a popular choice for setting the mood for many games. Although spooky or creepy music seems a no-brainer for a horror game, again remember that you're looking for "alien" and "uncomfortable" as much as "scary." Try to pick pieces that are somewhat discordant, perhaps even slightly unpleasant (though not to the point of making it hard to concentrate on the game). I personally have had a great deal of luck with some of the pieces from the soundtrack of *Ravenous*. Although many of the pieces are too obviously steeped in the early years of Americana, some of the others are both spooky and truly disturbing in their use of dissonance.

All this said, of course, remember that no amount of metagame tools are as effective at setting the mood as a DM who's into what he or she is doing. These suggestions are provided to help *enhance* your efforts at atmosphere, but they're minor aids at best; they won't do the job for you.

to have been abandoned overnight, despite the fact that there's no way to leave. Closer inspection reveals a populace huddled in their homes, hiding a terrible secret, while their leaders have vanished to prepare for a great rite.

When the Call sounds again, in a day made night by the overhanging clouds, the sea reaches out for the PCs directly, in the form of Dagon's fish-men.

Eventually, by questioning or following the remaining townsfolk, the PCs discover the shrine of Dagon, concealed beneath Ashenport's church. Within, they have the opportunity to confront the human leader of the cult, but this is not the end of their travails in Ashenport.

Only at the moment of lowest tide, either guided by cultists or warned by fellow travelers, can the party locate the complex of caves at the rocky shore, wherein the inhuman Voice of Dagon dwells. Only by defeating this alien threat, the true architect of the horrors of Ashenport, can the heroes save themselves and end the threat of Dagon's cult.

Out of Order

The events of "The Last Breaths of Ashenport" are divided up into four periods across two days. This represents the *most likely* order in which the events occur, but the intent is not to "railroad" the players. As you already know if you've run the game before, the average party can circumvent the best-laid plans of DMs and game designers in 60 seconds flat. Don't hesitate to run these events out of order or in a shorter time period than allotted. This requires a bit of on-the-fly alteration, but it shouldn't prove difficult. Where necessary, we've provided additional sidebars of advice, offering guidance on how to alter a scene or encounter based on when the PCs reach it.

Adventure Hooks

Obviously, the adventure requires that the PCs find their way to Ashenport at more or less the right time. Presented below are several ways you can accomplish this.

Random Chance: Perhaps the easiest way is to have the PCs on the road that passes through Ashenport when the terrible storms roll in, forcing them to seek shelter.

Trade Fair: As the time for the sacrifice nears, Ashenport sends word to various communities and merchant guilds, inviting a few travelers to a festival where they trade fish, local crafts, and treasures salvaged from the sea in exchange for various goods difficult to come by so far from civilization. The PCs might choose to attend on their own volition or, more likely, be asked to attend on behalf of an NPC patron.

Investigation: Although the town is isolated and the road lightly traveled, it's possible that *someone* has noticed the pattern of annual disappearances in the area around Ashenport. The PCs might be here specifically to investigate what's been happening.

Approaching Ashenport

As the PCs approach the town, read or paraphrase the following:

Between the heavy clouds and the endless rain, you might as well be blind. In the occasional flash of lightning, however, as the rain is forced aside by a gust of howling wind, you can just barely make out the road ahead. A veritable river of mud twists and winds through a copse of gnarled trees and along a rocky coastline battered by white-capped swells.

And beyond, visible only by the brightest thunderbolts, stands a town. From what you can see, the buildings are old and patched, and the roofs are shingled peaks. Just another village, it seems, but something about it sets your teeth on edge and your skin to crawling. But then, perhaps it is just the cold and the rain . . .

Ashenport Conditions

The roads leading to and within Ashenport are so sodden that they've all become mud, reducing movement to one-half speed. Once the first night in Ashenport falls, the weather grows even worse, as Dagon's power works to ensure the sacrifices cannot escape. It continues to rain within Ashenport, and the weather beyond the town grows into a terrible thunderstorm.

After spending at least 24 hours in town, a successful DC 19 Nature check reveals that the weather patterns are not natural.

Rain (within Ashenport): Rain reduces visibility. All creatures more than 1 square distant have concealment (-2 to attack rolls). Perception checks take a -2 penalty. The rain automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames. At the end of every full minute (10 rounds), characters carrying protected flames, such as lanterns, should roll a saving throw. If they fail, those flames are extinguished as well.

Thunderstorms (outside Ashenport): The combined effects of precipitation and wind reduce visibility dramatically. Adjacent creatures have concealment, while creatures more than 1 square distant have total concealment (-5 to attack rolls). Perception checks take a -5 penalty. The storm automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames. At the end of every round, characters carrying protected flames, such as lanterns, should roll a saving throw. If they fail, those flames are extinguished as well.

Every minute (10 rounds), a lightning bolt strikes the earth in a random location, as a 2-square burst. It attacks at +6 vs. Reflex, and it deals 2d6+2 lightning damage, plus the target is deafened until save.

The severity of the winds impedes movement. Any attempt to move in any direction other than back toward Ashenport is automatically slowed. A PC who experiences this phenomenon gains a +5 bonus to the Nature check to determine that the storm is not natural.

Roughly a mile beyond Ashenport in any direction, the wind and the rains cause the temperature to drop precipitously. The temperature is cold, requiring a DC 22 Endurance check every 8 hours (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 159).

These effects don't come into play during the adventure, but should encourage the PCs not to abandon Ashenport early.

Illumination: Due to the storm, night and day aren't much different. The PCs have to provide their own light sources.

Ashenport Overview

When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Although still rendered gray and miserable by the constant downpour, the town of Ashenport looks better up close than it did from a distance. You can now see that many of the buildings are sturdier than they appeared; a few are even made of quarried stone, rather than wood. Even in the inclement weather, several shops bustle with activity, and

the light that gleams through many a window is bright and cheerful. Sporadic people trudge their way along the muddy roads, shoulders hunched against the rain, going about this business or that.

The salty tang of the sea, and the lingering odor of a hundred years of fishing, insinuate themselves around your mouth and nose. Even the torrential rains and winds cannot completely strip the powerful stench from the air.

Anyone in the area can tell the PCs that the town still plans to hold its trade fair, but that Alderman Ritter has decided to wait for the weather to clear up. The townsfolk are only too happy to point the PCs toward the Smooth Sailing Inn and Tavern (area 1). "Ain't just the only place in town for a hot meal and a warm bed," the PCs are told, "but the only place in a dozen leagues. Might meet you there later to hoist a tankard or two; gods know I'll not be doing much else 'til the sky stops weepin'."

In fact, every citizen of Ashenport is a member of Dagon's cult, and each citizen is automatically hostile to the PCs and other strangers. However, they put on an act of friendliness, trying to keep the strangers off guard until the sea claims them. Unless stated otherwise, assume that a citizen of Ashenport has a Bluff of +14. A successful Insight check is enough to tell a suspicious PC that the people here aren't as friendly as they're making themselves out to be, though the check won't tell the PC *why*.

If it ever becomes important, assume that the average citizen of Ashenport has the combat abilities of either a human minion or a human bandit (*Monster Manual* 162–163), whichever seems appropriate. Where NPCs are expected to engage in combat, their stats are presented in the tactical encounter.

1. The Smooth Sailing Inn and Tavern

Smooth Sailing is Ashenport's largest tavern, and the town's *only* inn. Any of the townsfolk can direct the party here, and if the PCs want a roof over their heads, this is the only place to find it. The building marked 1A represents the stables, which are located behind the Smooth Sailing but not technically part of the same structure.

Different styles of architecture suggest the building before you was once two or three separate shops, before someone sealed up the spaces between and knocked down the intervening walls. It now forms the largest structure on the block. Smoke rises from several chimneys, only to vanish into the falling rain. Firelight gleams through several windows, and the sound of conversation—nearly inaudible in the storm—leaks from the doorway. A sign above that door, portraying a ship at full sail on a waveless sea, flaps violently in the wind.

The impression of three buildings joined into one continues once the PCs enter.

Three different patterns of wooden floor, at three slightly different levels, make up the common room. Beyond this single quirk, however, this might as well be any other tavern: a bar stands on one side of the vast chamber, a staircase on the other, with a smattering of chairs and tables scattered throughout the area. Two fireplaces radiate a comforting warmth throughout the room, and several serving staff whirl about with tankards of ale and plates of smoked fish.

The PCs can buy basic drinks and foodstuffs here for 110% of the prices in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Smooth Sailing is bustling, at least in a relative sense, with activity, and contains several people with whom the PCs might interact.

Pioter: Pioter, a male human, is the owner and proprietor of the Smooth Sailing Inn and Tavern. He's a sour-looking fellow, with gaunt, unshaven cheeks and salt-and-pepper hair. Unlike his serving staff, he makes no effort to appear friendly, instead standing gruffly behind the bar and directing any efforts at conversation toward one of his staff.

Sannuel, Relina, and Manelda: The human staff of the Smooth Sailing is far friendlier than their boss, or at least they act that way. They're quick to respond to orders and happy to answer questions about the history of the town—minus any reference to Dagon, of course. Sannuel is a dashing rake of a man, and Relina fits the stereotypical image of the buxom blonde barmaid to a T. Manelda is somewhat older, and she gives the impression of having seen it all before.

Guests: Currently, the Smooth Sailing is playing host to around two dozen guests (plus the PCs), and is full nearly to capacity. These guests include the following:

✦ Terza is an emissary for the Goldleaf Trading Consortium in the city of Four Winds. Terza is a dark-haired, graceful half-elf. She'd be a perfect beauty if her left eye wasn't an ugly white, obscured by a cataract. She boasts a tattoo of a gold leaf on her left shoulder. The Goldleaf Consortium has no interest in trading for Ashenport's fish or lumber, but they are interested in an exclusive deal to sell the treasures scrounged from the sea.

✦ 6 Goldleaf guards (*male and female human guards; Monster Manual* 162) have gold leaf tattoos.

✦ Matthias Creel is an emissary from Surrens, Creel, and Blackwell, based in the Free City of Greyhawk.

This male human seeks the same goal as Terza, and any interaction between them is coldly polite at best.

✦ 8 Surrens, Creel, and Blackwell guards (*male and female human guards; Monster Manual* 162).

✦ Jandal Phen is a jeweler and sculptor who hopes to sell his services to the folks of Ashenport to restore, reshape, and create duplicates of their various treasures. This male human is friendly, but somewhat intimidated by his fellow guests, and he is worried that their presence can make his own efforts harder.

✦ 2 hired bodyguards (*male human guards; Monster Manual* 162).

2. The Bountiful Tide General Store

If the PCs need to acquire supplies or tools while in Ashenport, the Bountiful Tide is the place to go.

There's little to differentiate this building from the other surrounding shops, save that the walls are meticulously whitewashed (or at least they were meticulous before the heavy rains). Above the door hangs a painting of a beautiful shoreline, with the words "A Bountiful Tide" etched above it in gold paint.

Inside the shop are numerous aisles, with goods divided (very roughly) into categories. For instance, ropes and pitons can be found in the aisle marked "exploring," while rations and salt can be found in "foodstuffs." Everything here costs 110% of the prices in the *Player's Handbook*. The shop sells no weapons or armor.

Lena: Lena is an old human woman, with iron-gray hair and a pronounced limp. She approaches customers with a huge smile, constantly calling them "dear" and "sweetie" and similar terms. If you like, you can build a brief Diplomacy-based skill challenge around her; if the PCs are successful, she'll drop her prices to match those in the *Player's Handbook*.

3. Blacksmith

If the PCs intended to commission any work from the town blacksmith, they're out of luck.

The anvil, the wall of hammers and tongs, and the heavy furnace clearly mark this shop as that of a blacksmith. You see nobody inside, however, nor any tools or weapons hanging on racks for sale.

In point of fact, Ashenport's blacksmith has spent several weeks in preparation for this time of year, ensuring that the cultists have weapons for dealing with anyone who proves resistant to Dagon's Call. When the PCs arrive, he is out among the populace, delivering weapons to those equipped to use them. He has no intention of returning to work until after the low tide.

4. Ash Grove

Here, in the center of town, a densely thick copse of trees grows, and all of the trees are drooping and weeping in the heavy rains. A full 75 feet across, the grove is far too healthy and far too well tended to be mere chance. Clearly, this grove is something the people of Ashenport take very seriously.

Indeed, if the PCs ask any of the natives about the grove, they learn that it has stood as long as Ashenport. The trees nearly died a while back, but since then have recovered and thrive as fully as Ashenport does.

Any PCs who decides to push through to the rough center of the grove can make a DC 14 Search check. If they succeed, they discover a small sculpture of Melora, now overgrown and defaced with edged weapons.

Any native of Ashenport who can be made at least friendly acknowledges the presence of the sculpture, but claims, "It has nearly been forgotten. I think the damage was done a generation or more back, when the town was suffering and the people needed to vent their frustrations."

The damage was done as part of the town's shift to the worship of Dagon, of course, but nobody's going to admit that.

The PCs' first combat in Ashenport occurs here, on the morning after Dagon's first Call. See Part Two: Confusion.

5. The Town Hall

This is the center of government—such as it is—in Ashenport.

This large stone building, one of the tallest in Ashenport, can only be the seat of government. Most of its windows are dark, but lantern light shines through a few, forming peeping eyes in the building's façade and suggests that business continues even in this weather.

Although large for Ashenport, this isn't the monolithic governing body that might be found in larger communities. It boasts three stories and several dozen offices, but most are either unused or are occupied by simple clerks recording information such as the day's catch as reported by the town's fisherfolk.

If the PCs can talk their way past the clerks to see either the alderman or the sheriff on the first evening, they find Ritter polite but distant, and Kaern rude and belligerent. Both request that, unless the PCs have a sort of emergency, they wait a few days for the rains to cease and the trade fair to start before

speaking with the town's officials. If the PCs insist on speaking to Ritter about past disappearances, his voice grows quiet, and he whispers, "Yes, we've had problems in our town, but I cannot speak about them here and now. I'll send someone to fetch you tomorrow, and we'll speak more openly." This is a ruse to get the PCs out; Ritter assumes they won't be any problem after they hear Dagon's Call. A DC 19 Insight check reveals that he's not being entirely truthful, but he'll say no more here and now.

Alderman Ritter (see Encounter S5): Ritter is Ashenport's alderman (essentially the mayor). He is a jovial-seeming man, slightly overweight, with immaculately coifed blond hair.

Sheriff Kaern (male human guard; Monster Manual 162): Kaern is the perfect stereotype of the power-hungry small-town sheriff. He's a bully who enjoys throwing his weight around and trying to intimidate outsiders. He stands nearly six-and-a-half feet tall, and his bristly brown hair and beard make him look bearlike.

Clerks (male and female humans).

6. Holding Cells

There's not much crime in Ashenport, particularly since the entire town converted to a single faith, but these cells remain from the days where life was not so peaceful.

This squat building is made of a dull, filthy stone. Only a single heavy door provides ingress, and all the windows boast rusty iron bars. Although it has largely faded, blurred by many years and the overpowering scents of ocean, rain, and fish, the tang of human misery still clings to the small structure.

This building is nothing more than a single open "office," behind which runs a hall with half a dozen cells. One guard is on duty here at all times, increased to four when any of the cells are occupied.

1 or 4 prison guards (male and female human guards; Monster Manual 162).

There's little chance the PCs bother with this area, but if they happen to discover it any time after the first dawn, they find it abandoned, and the keys are still in the desk. If they choose to use it as such, it makes a good place to leave any enemies they take alive.

7. The Docks

In better weather, this is the heart and soul of Ashenport's economy.

In the white-capped waves whipped up by the stormy winds, it's almost impossible to make out the sequence of small wooden jetties. Over half a dozen of them stretch out along the coast. Several small fishing boats are tied tightly to them, rising and rocking with the waves like drunken winos, threatening to tip completely over.

Other than the occasional fisherman running out to double-check the status of his boat, the docks remain empty.

The coastline slopes upward toward the north, becoming a low cliff-face rather than a beachfront by the time it reaches area 12.

8. Tannery

As might be imagined, this is where Ashenport's citizens bring hides and skins to be tanned and worked into leather goods.

Even in the heavy rains and winds, the stench of tanning chemicals and dyes lingers heavy on the air, causing stomachs to turn and eyes to water.

As with many other shops, the tannery is shut down for the duration of the storm (and the sacrifice). However, once the PCs determine the nature of the shop, allow a DC 19 Nature check. Those who succeed realize that, when it's not storming and the winds are weaker, the stench of the tannery encompasses the Smooth Sailing Inn and Tavern. That makes the positioning of the inn a poor business choice, since it would drive business away during other times of the year.

The truth is that when they're not busy sacrificing passersby to Dagon, the folk of Ashenport don't *want* strangers lingering about.

9. The Mill

Although the grain mill is shut down due to the weather, it's not entirely abandoned.

This old wooden building contains little more than a heavy and ponderous grindstone and other milling equipment. Although you cannot initially see what power turns the stone, you can eventually hear the running of a small underground stream, barely audible over the rain.

Not all the cultists of Dagon are as patient as others. A small band has gathered together, prepared to take direct action against anyone who escapes the first Call. This group consists of two thuggish cultists and two mystic cultists. These NPCs attack the PCs on day two (see Part Two: Confusion, and Encounter AA: Ambush in Ashenport).

When the PCs arrive in town, the four cultists are holed up here, discussing strategy and preparing weapons. If the PCs explore the mill this early, the

cultists scatter, but if the PCs prove hostile or unwilling to let them leave, they attack. If this happens, run Encounter AA, but place the combat in a large room with an obstacle (grindstone) in the middle, rather than around Ash Grove.

If the PCs explore the mill any time after the first dawn, it's empty except for a few sleeping bags and bits of refuse.

10. Home of Alderman Ritter

The finest house in all Ashenport is, unsurprisingly, inhabited by its highest citizen.

A structure nearly as tall as the town hall, though not nearly so broad, boasts several peaked roofs and a number of gleaming windows. The entire property is surrounded by a wrought-iron fence.

Alderman Ritter lives here, along with his wife, a butler, and several full-time guards.

Alderman Ritter (see Encounter S5): See area 5: The Town Hall.

The Lady Ritter (female human mage; Monster Manual 163): Lady Ritter is a middle-aged woman with golden blonde hair. She is a perfect hostess, but prefers to let her husband do the talking.

Ronguel: Ronguel is the Ritter family butler, and this male human has performed these duties since before the current head of household was born.

4 Household guards (male and female human guards; Monster Manual 162).

11. Gleaming Dawn Church

The ancestral center of worship for Ashenport is still serving the community, but its focus has changed dramatically. The building marked 11A is the home of the church's official high priest—currently Mother Sharallan—while 11B is the Ashenport cemetery. A DC 19 Perception check reveals that the cemetery hasn't been used in many years. This is because all of Ashenport's dead are now given to the sea, and thus to Dagon.

Atop a high, rocky hill on the northwest side of town stands what is obviously a church. Constructed of heavy wood, it appears to have once been coated in a bright whitewash that has since largely peeled away. The great holy symbol atop the short steeple seems almost to be bleeding as it sheds the rain.

The hill is steep, requiring a DC 10 Athletics check to traverse. The stairs carved into the stone, of course, make this easier.

The interior of the church is typical.

You find yourselves within a long chamber, its vaulted ceilings making it appear far more cavernous than it truly is. On the far end, a raised dais boasts a heavy altar, draped in cloth embroidered with a smattering of holy icons, and supporting several chalices, incense burners, and candelabras. Rows of wooden pews, made rough and rickety by years of use, face the altar. Several stained glass windows—probably worth more than the rest of the building combined—sit high in the walls. The occasional flash of lightning sends multihued patterns dancing and wriggling obscenely across the floor.

The symbols on the cloth include the signs of Pelor and Melora.

A DC 14 Religion check suggests that something is just a bit off. All the proper trappings, tools, and symbols are present, but they don't appear to have been used recently.

One of the pews in the right rear of the church is counterbalanced to swing up, revealing a staircase leading down into the shrine (see Part Three: Veneration). It normally requires a DC 19 Perception check to find this hidden passage.

Mother Sharallan (see Encounter S5): Sharallan is a tall woman, so gaunt as to appear starving. She has thinning brown hair and a perpetual frown. She views everyone, friend and stranger, as a nuisance to be tolerated, but her voice is kinder than her expression.

If the PCs visit the church on their first evening in town, Sharallan appears. Her initial reaction is to ask them to leave, since she's preparing for an important rite "beseeching the gods' grace on our town and the coming gathering." She's willing to let them stay to pray if they want, but she insists on keeping an eye on them. If the PCs ask why the religious paraphernalia

Fleeing Ashenport

As written, the hazards and difficulties of the storm should be enough to keep everyone around—including the PCs—until the adventure is concluded, one way or the other. (And one would also hope that most players would prefer to have their characters get to the bottom of things, since running away from adventure doesn't make for an interesting session of D&D.)

Nevertheless, some players might be determined to make every effort to escape the town, despite the storm. This might be pure selfishness, or they might be convinced by an NPC (likely Matthias) that it's worth the risk. If so, and if you don't mind being somewhat heavy-handed as a DM, feel free to have them encounter *things* in the wild, creatures of Dagon at least as deadly as those they must face in Ashenport. One encounter (Out in the Wild, on page 105) is provided for just this purpose.

seems ill-used, she claims that few of Ashenport's citizens have been to church lately, due to the weather and preparations for the trade fair. A DC 19 Insight check reveals the falsehood, but if she is accused of lying, she insists the PCs leave immediately. If they refuse, she calls for her helpers (see Encounter S5, replacing Ritter with another mystic cultist). Run the S5 fight here, but replace that map with a room filled with pews and a raised dais on one side. The PCs might find it odd (if they battle Sharallan on the first night) that nobody attempts to arrest them. This is because the cultists still hope the Call takes them.

After the first dawn, the church seems abandoned until the events of Part Three: Veneration.

12. The Coastal Caves

Until the lowest tide, this is a short (roughly 25-foot) cliff-face down to the ocean. See Part Four: Confrontation for what happens when the caves are exposed.

PART ONE: ARRIVAL

(Afternoon through Late Night)

The storm is pounding and the roads have turned to mud. With the possible exception of a stray townsperson, nobody braves the elements to greet the PCs. Although they might explore the town a bit, they probably wind up at the Smooth Sailing Inn and Tavern eventually.

Once there, the staff greets them jovially enough, and the PCs can spend a few moments in conversation with Terza, Matthias, Jandal, and the others. Although the weather is miserable, nothing *obviously* untoward occurs until after midnight.

Dagon's Call, First Night

Roughly 2 hours before dawn, regardless of whether the PCs are awake or asleep, read or paraphrase the following.

Slowly, gradually, a new sound penetrates the pounding of the rain and the howling of the winds. Barely audible at first, it resolves itself into an alien, high-pitched keening. It resounds with loss, with sadness—the lament of a mother who has lost her children or of the sailor stranded far from home. It echoes from over the waves and grows ever louder until the storm has receded into the background. It fills your ears, insinuates itself through your mind and your soul, until you can think and dream of almost nothing else.

It is not beautiful. It is not comforting. And yet you find yourself overcome with an irresistible urge to follow.

At this point, the horrific sound—the Call of Dagon—makes an attack roll, with a +7 modifier, against the Will defense of everyone in Ashenport who is not a worshiper of Dagon. (This is a charm attack.) Those who are hit are compelled to move toward the sea immediately by the most direct route. They move at a standard walking pace, but do not deviate, and they can overcome obstacles in their way (such as doors). They do not fight to defend themselves, but attempt to move around any foes to reach the ocean. Once there, they walk into the thrashing tide and allow themselves to drown. (Assume that, between rising from their bed, leaving their rooms, and finding their way through the streets at a steady pace, it takes 1d4+4 minutes for any given individual to travel from the Smooth Sailing to a watery death.)

Anyone who takes damage is entitled to an immediate saving throw to resist Dagon's Call and defend themselves. The Call ends 10 minutes after it begins, fading as gradually as it appeared. Once someone

successfully saves, she is immune to that Call, but not future ones.

Obviously, you roll the attack against each of the PCs, but what of the NPCs? You can roll all nineteen attacks, but this can be time-consuming. If you'd rather go with a more narrative-based approach, assume that, on this first night, half of the warriors

Skill Challenge: Questioning Townsfolk

Use these guidelines when the PCs attempt to gain information from any of Ashenport's unnamed citizens.

Setup: The PCs must interrogate one of Ashenport's Dagon-worshiping citizens.

Level: 8.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Intimidate

Bluff (DC 14): The PCs attempt to trick or mislead the cultists, perhaps trying to convince them that the PCs already know more than they do. The PCs can do this for a maximum of two victories.

Intimidate (DC 14): The PCs can threaten or coerce the villagers—who, despite their horrid faith, are still mostly normal folk—into cooperation. The PCs can do this for a maximum of four victories with this skill.

Diplomacy: The villagers are too fanatical to negotiate. A Diplomacy attempt fails automatically.

Insight (DC 14): The PCs recognize that the cultists are nervous and can play upon those fears. On a failure, the PCs take a -2 penalty to their next Bluff or Intimidate checks. On a success, the PCs gain a +2 bonus to their next Bluff or Intimidate checks. This skill can be attempted only twice, or only once if the first attempt fails.

Religion (DC 19): The PCs can point out prior tales and incidents when those who turned against their gods—such as the people have turned against Pelor and Melora—suffered greatly, even when they appeared to be blessed. A success scores one victory and grants a +2 bonus to the next Bluff or Intimidate check. This skill can be attempted only once.

Success: The PCs learn everything under Failures, below, plus the individual admits that the rite is dedicated to none other than Father Dagon. He or she also admits that the actual ceremony is in a hidden shrine *under* the church.

Failure: The PCs have varying results based on how many successes they achieve.

One success or fewer: The locals refuse outright to speak to the PCs. The party learns nothing.

Two successes: The locals admit that their leaders have likely gone to prepare for a religious rite that the townsfolk practice once a year. They claim that this rite is meant to protect them from the call of the sea.

Three successes: As two victories, plus the local also admits that a gathering is planned at the church this coming evening as part of the rite.

In addition, some of the locations below detail further information the PCs might gain with a certain number of successes.

If you like, you can have several of the citizens fight rather than cooperate (as zealots are wont to do).

succumb to Dagon's Call, but that Matthias, Terza, and Jandal successfully save.

Precisely what happens next depends on the actions of the PCs. Thankfully, the Call wakes even those who successfully save, so they are in a position to stop others from drowning themselves. Presumably, the PCs first focus on saving any of their fellow party members who succumbed, but they're (hopefully) decent enough to also stop some of the guards, even though it's unlikely they can save all of them. PCs have several options for stopping those intent on drowning themselves, from holding them in place (by grabs or spells that cause immobilization or restraint), to incapacitating them (by knocking them out in combat or with spells such as *sleep*), to hitting them until they snap out of it. Terza and Jandal, and those guards who did not succumb, take similar steps to save their own companions, but Matthias remains hidden in his room.

If you don't wish to roll the fate of each and every guard who has succumbed to the Call, assume that half of those who succumbed, and whom the PCs did not themselves save, succeed in drowning themselves, while the others are stopped.

Once the Call ceases, the surviving visitors to Ashenport are in a panic and might turn to the PCs for guidance.

Troubleshooting: Although unlikely, it's just possible that *all* the PCs fail their saving throws. If this happens, Terza or one of her guards attempts to stop them from leaving the inn, hopefully snapping one or more of them out of it in time to save the others.

Ad Hoc Experience: For each NPC the PCs actively save from drowning, award the party a minor quest reward of 100 XP.

Out of Order: You're Going Where?

So what happens if the PCs *don't* go back to the inn right after Dagon's second Call? It's assumed that they do, if only to return any of the NPCs they've saved, but they could have other ideas.

If so, you have two options. One, move Pioter's clumsy break-in to later in the day, when the PCs *are* present. This is the simplest solution, but it might strain credibility a bit. After all, if he was going to break in, why wouldn't he do it when everyone else was distracted by the Call?

Two, you can have the PCs discover some of the NPCs acting unusual, and let them determine (by magic or skills such as Heal) that they're drugged. Once this is done, they can track the poisoner from the back door of the tavern to Pioter's house. (The rains are heavy and the day overcast, but the tracks are still relatively fresh, and the mud soft, so the DC is only 18, +1 for every additional hour that has passed.)

And if worse comes to worst: So the PCs don't have a chance to question Pioter. They have plenty of other opportunities to learn what they need to know.

Part Two: Confusion

(Pre-Dawn through Afternoon)
As the sun rises on day two, read or paraphrase the following.

Behind the constant rains and stone-thick clouds, the lightening of the sky is all but imperceptible. Still, dawn has come, and Ashenport should be rising as well.

It is not. Even as the first few moments of morning creep past, the town remains utterly still. No doors slam, no shopkeepers huddle against the rain as they rush to start the new day's business. Other than yourselves and your fellow outsiders, not a soul stirs. The only signs of life are a few large gulls, undaunted by the rains, that perch among the town's roofs, like flies converging on a bloating corpse.

Despite the fact that there should be no way of leaving, due to the storm, the town appears empty. Nobody walks the streets, none of the tavern staff are present, and nobody answers the doors at town hall.

The other guests of the Smooth Sailing are only too happy to tell the PCs exactly what they experienced. They're frightened and are looking for anyone and everything to protect them. Terza offers the PCs 500 gp if they can ensure her safety and that of her people, plus find out what's going on. Jandal throws in 300 gp of his own. Matthias insists that the PCs protect him as well, but offers no coin.

A Closer Look

If the PCs spend at least an hour searching the town, compare their passive Perception to DC 14. Those who succeed realize that Ashenport is not so abandoned as it appears. Although the official structures and shops are indeed empty, most of the private homes show traces of life: a brief flicker of candlelight behind a waving curtain, moving shadows through the slats in the shutters, that sort of thing.

If the PCs confront any of these folks, the citizens claim that the strange sound of the previous night has happened before, and they are hiding themselves away until they're sure it's safe. A successful DC 8 Insight check reveals that the speaker is being deceptive. If the PCs can intimidate them successfully, or magically compel them to cooperate, they can gain further information.

Ambush at the Grove

The first time the PCs pass near Ash Grove (area 4) on this first morning, they are attacked by a small cadre of fanatical cultists too impatient to wait and see if the strangers succumb to the next Call.

Tactical Encounter: Ambush in Ashenport (page 90).

The PCs might question the cultists (or, using magic, their bodies). If they can be compelled into cooperating, the cultists can provide the same information as the citizens, presented above. In addition, with 3 or 4 victories, they admit that they sought to kill the PCs because they not only withstood Dagon's Call, but also (presumably) stopped others from sacrificing themselves.

Dagon's Call, First Day

Dagon's Call sounds again roughly 2 hours after a noon that remains as dark as night. The Call has the same mechanics, and the same results, as the first night.

If you again do not wish to roll attacks against each of the NPCs in the Smooth Sailing, assume that half the remaining guards, and *one* of the others—either Terza, Matthias, or Jandal—succumbs.

This time, however, Dagon's followers aren't content to leave things to chance. The PCs are making a nuisance of themselves. Even as the Call sounds and the PCs go about trying to save any of their companions (or anyone else) who succumbed, the sea reaches out for them in the form of several truly horrific, shambling creatures.

Tactical Encounter: The Sea's Long Reach (page 91).

Most of the NPCs retreat in fear, but if you'd like, you can have Terza's and Matthias's guards participate in the battle. Just add in another few fish-men to make up for it.

Who's That Creeping 'round My Door?

If and when the PCs return to the Smooth Sailing after Dagon's second Call, compare their passive Perception checks to a DC 19 (but remember to account for the penalties due to the rain). Those who succeed notice that the rear door to the tavern is open, or hear activity in the kitchen. Although this *could* be any of the guests rooting around for a snack, that seems unlikely immediately after Dagon's Call. Those who make the check also recognize that someone is trying to be stealthy.

If the PCs enter the kitchen, they find Pioter dosing the food and drink with a foul, ichorlike liquid. Pioter flees if possible, but if cornered or captured, drops to his knees and begs for his life.

From Pioter, the PCs can gain the same information as provided by the townsfolk, above. In addition, with at least three victories, Pioter admits that he was trying to drug the food to make the outsiders more susceptible to Dagon's Call. Because he runs the inn, the rest of the cult sees the guests as his responsibility, and he's frightened by the fact that so many have resisted the Call. In addition, Pioter identifies both Alderman Ritter and Mother Sharallan as high-ranking members of the cult.

The drug is a unique poison that works only by ingestion. It makes a +7 attack against Will defense, and if it hits, it bestows a –2 penalty to Will defense for 1 hour. It goes bad within 6 hours if not used.

Part Three: Veneration

(Late Afternoon through Pre-Dawn)

The PCs have had several opportunities to learn of the gathering to be held that evening in the Gleaming Dawn Church. If the PCs have failed to discover this, however, when the evening comes you should compare their passive Perception score to a DC 19, as long as they are outside. Success indicates that, through the downpour, they spot a small group of people converging from various streets at the base of the hill and mounting the steps toward the church.

And should even that fail, have Terza or one of the guards tell the PCs that they've seen people converging on the church. If you have to do this, though, it means the PCs have missed *every* opportunity to discover the importance of the church on their own. (What have they been *doing*, anyway?)

If the PCs figure out for themselves that they need to go to the church, rather than having Terza or one of her guards point the way, grant them 200 XP as a minor quest reward.

Oddly enough, once the PCs brave the wind and the slick steps up the hillside (feel free to call for a few DC 10 Acrobatics checks if like), they find the church empty. The candelabra on the altar is burning, so someone *was* here, but where are they now?

Out of Order: An Early Arrival

Don't panic if the PCs find the hidden trapdoor earlier than they're supposed to. You can still run the shrine almost entirely as written. Ignore any references to groups of worshipers (they haven't arrived yet). You might also consider locating Althanis and his fish-men attendants (see areas S9 and S10) in the high priest's quarters (area S7) instead. You can still run the combat mostly as presented just by altering the environmental hazards.

As described in the area description for 11: The Gleaming Dawn Church, a secret door beneath a pivoting pew provides access to the underground shrine. This normally requires a DC 21 Perception check to find, but grant the PCs the following circumstance modifiers. (Unlike most circumstance modifiers, these stack.)

✦ If the PCs already know the secret door exists, perhaps from interrogating townsfolk, they gain a +2 on their check.

✦ If the PCs followed someone here, the pew hasn't clicked back into position yet. They gain another +2 on their check.

When the pew slides aside, it reveals a spiral staircase leading down to area S1.

Dagon's Hidden Shrine

The hidden shrine to Dagon is small, but dangerous. The following features are common throughout the shrine *unless stated otherwise*.

Ceilings: Between 8 and 10 feet high. Ceilings, walls, and floors are worked stone.

Door, Strong Wooden: 2 inches thick; AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex 5; hp 20; break DC 16. Doors are *unlocked* unless noted otherwise; those that are locked require a DC 20 Thievery check.

Door, Secret (Stone): 2 inches thick; AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex 5; hp 40; break DC 25; Perception DC 19 to locate. All secret doors require a DC 20 Thievery check to open.

Illumination: Characters (and worshipers) must provide their own illumination.

S1. The Entry Hall

The stairs creak and shift beneath your feet, almost as though they were grunting in pain. The chamber into which the stairs descend is rounded on one side. Two doors provide egress to your right and left. Ahead of you, a large double door stands between two smaller ones.

All the walls are etched with images of horrific creatures of the deep, from mighty serpents to great krakens. Their eyes glare at you in hatred.

The door to area 3 is locked (from this side, not from the other); the others are not. The two rooms labeled 1A are cloakrooms, where worshipers don ceremonial garb. Unfortunately, though several remain, these simple cloaks fail to cover either the face or much of the body, and thus they are useless as disguises.

As soon as anyone opens any of the doors leading from the room (perhaps before you've even read the above description), the fish-men attack.

Tactical Encounter: Beyond the Door (page 93).

If a fish-man successfully flees to area 5, the door at the base of the stairs is locked. Otherwise it is not.

S2. Bedroom

This chamber is empty but for a pair of unmade bunks, each with a small footlocker beneath it. The sheets are yellowed from long use, and acrid with the sweat of sleeping men with evil dreams.

When preparing for rites, some of the cult's adepts sleep here, rather than returning to their homes each night. The footlockers hold only changes of clothes. The room off to the right is a closet full of blankets, pillows, spare cloaks, and a shelf with various unholy treatises on Dagon, worth about 50 gp to a collector or religious scholar.

Tactical Encounter: Beyond the Door (page 93).

Skill Challenge: Questioning Cultists

Use these guidelines when the PCs attempt to gain information from any of the cultists beneath the church. If questioning either Sharallan or Althanis personally, increase all DCs by 1.

Setup: The PCs must interrogate one of Dagon's cultists.

Level: 8.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Intimidate

Bluff (DC 14): The PCs attempt to trick or mislead the cultists, perhaps trying to convince them that they already know more than they do. The PCs can do this for a maximum of two victories.

Intimidate (DC 14): The PCs can threaten or coerce the cultists into cooperation. The PCs can do this for a maximum of four victories with this skill. If the PCs have defeated Sharallan already, the PCs gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks. If the PCs have defeated Althanis, the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus.

Diplomacy: The cultists are too fanatical to negotiate. A Diplomacy attempt fails automatically.

Insight (DC 14): The PCs recognize that the cultists are nervous about the fact that the PCs have infiltrated the shrine and can play upon those fears. On a failure, the PCs take a -2 penalty to their next Bluff or Intimidate checks. On a success, the PCs gain a +2 bonus to their next Bluff or Intimidate checks. This skill can be attempted only twice, or only once if the first attempt fails.

Religion: Unlike the villagers above, the cultists below are too fanatical to accept any questioning of their faith. A Religion check attempting to do so does not qualify as a failure, but neither can it offer any successes; it isn't accurate.

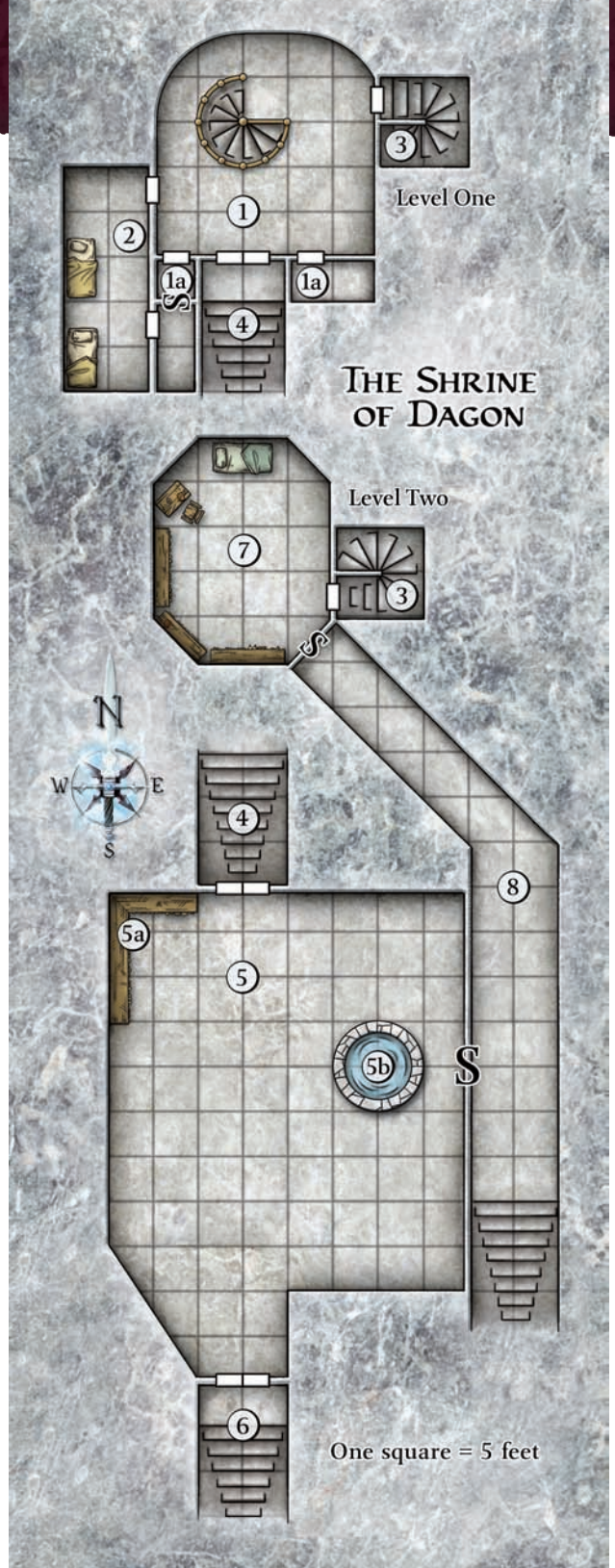
Success: The PCs learn everything under Failures, below, plus the PCs learn of the hidden caves (area 12), and that they're only accessible for a few hours around the year's lowest tides.

Failure: The PCs have varying results based on how many successes they achieve.

One success or fewer: The cultists refuse to divulge anything to the PCs.

Two successes: The PCs learn anything from the cultists that they could have learned with four successes against the townsfolk. (See the prior Skill Challenge sidebar on page 79.)

Three successes: The PCs learn that *the entire town* belongs to Dagon. Every single citizen is a member of the cult.



S3. The Spiral Stair

Whereas the stair from the church was iron, this spiral was carved from the living rock. It leads down into the depths, to the gods know where, and your footsteps echo into infinity.

The door leading to area 7 is locked.

Tactical Encounter: Beyond the Door (page 93).

S4. Downward

If the PCs listen at the door, those who succeed on a DC 19 Perception check recognize that someone or something lurks beyond. Otherwise, they are surprised when the encounter begins.

The great double door creaks open, revealing a long straight stair.

If the PCs have at least 9 squares of illumination, add the following.

You think you can just make out another double door, almost identical to the one you've just opened, at the base of the stair.

As soon as one door is fully open (perhaps before you've even read the above description), the fish-men attack.

Tactical Encounter: Beyond the Door (page 93).

S5. The Pool

You can see only half of the chamber, due to a heavy black curtain that hangs across the room, waving slightly despite the lack of any breeze. To your right, a pair of bookcases creaks beneath the weight of ancient tomes of cracked leather and yellowing pages.

Once the PCs can see the other half of the room, read or paraphrase the following.

The chamber's hidden half is a nearly perfect square, with a large stone pool precisely in the center. The rim of the font is carved with repeating images of sea serpents devouring whole ships, and the water—despite the fact that it cannot be but a few feet deep—is an impenetrable black.

The water in the pool is normal (albeit somewhat stagnant and stale). It appears black because the inside of the pool is painted in that color.

The two cultists attack immediately, since they do not recognize the PCs as fellow worshipers.

Tactical Encounter: The Pool (page 94).

If the PCs have met Alderman Ritter before, they recognize him during or after the battle. This doubtless goes a long way to prove that the cult of Dagon is prevalent throughout Ashenport.

The PCs might wish to question any survivors; see the following sidebar.

Treasure: Although the books are mildly informative, particularly on the topic of demons, the entire collection is, despite its age, worth only about 100 gp. Shoved between two of the books is a divine scroll containing the rituals *commune with nature*, *Leomund's secret chest*, and *wizard's sight*.

S6. Even Farther Downward

These stairs are identical to S4, but without the lurking fish-men.

S7. The Abode of Evil

Something is subtly off-putting about this chamber. Perhaps it is the contents: a bed, a writing desk, and a trio of bookcases. The books smell uncomfortably of mold and old parchment, the sheets of the bed are stained with a yellow-gray slick of slime, and the chair by the desk has the mark of claws or spines in the armrests.

Perhaps it is the shape of the room: octagonal, yet

somehow uneven, as though it was carved without care or measurement.

And perhaps it is none of these things, but instead it is the faint aura of depravity that clings to the chamber like a morning mist.

These are the living quarters of Althanis, high priest of Dagon's cult in Ashenport, servant of the Voice of Dagon (see area C6).

Unless the PCs have breached the shrine earlier than anticipated and you've decided that Althanis is here rather than at the altar, no encounter takes place in this room.

Treasure: A DC 8 Religion check reveals that several of the old books on the bookcases are truly ancient treatises on demons and demonology. These include *Daemons and Their Ilk* by Ardan Fein, Baloquist's *Abyssal Numerology and Symbolism as Applied to Mortal Conjurations*, and even an abridged translation of Iggwilv's *Demonomicon*. These three books are worth roughly 150 gp each in the right market.

S8. Behind the Walls

The corridor stretches before you, leading to yet another staircase. Footsteps, speech, and even breathing echoes strangely in this passage, returning to you twisted and distorted.

Perhaps the warping of the echoes is due to the intricate carvings? Walls, ceiling, and floor are covered with more images of marine creatures. Immense claws snap humans in half, while tentacles the size of redwoods wrap themselves about shattered galleons. Winding through the center of it all, along the floor, is a series of impossibly long serpents, with heads on both ends, each biting the throat of the next. So real are the images, you can practically smell the salty tang of the sea.

From this side, the secret doors are not hidden and require no roll to find, but they still require the relevant rolls to open.

This hidden passage is both a means for the high priest to access the altar from his own chambers, and an escape route for the faithful should something go wrong. (In fact, depending on when the PCs discover this passage, it might currently be used for just that purpose. See area S9.)

At a point along the hall (shaded on the map), the passage is trapped. The worshipers all know how to avoid the trap by paying close attention to the carvings on the floor.

Tactical Encounter: The Hidden Hall (page 96).

Everyone in the marked square, and in both adjacent squares, is targeted by the trap. The various sea creatures on the walls appear to suddenly flick their tongues at the PCs; it is these that form the blades of the trap.

In addition to the effects above, the trap causes an immensely loud bell to sound, warning that someone is in the hidden passage.

S9. The Inner Sanctuary

You have entered a perfectly square chamber, which is empty except for several rows of kneeling cloths on which are embroidered huge, gaping, ichthyic maws. The ceiling rises nearly 30 feet above you. On the opposite side of the room, a narrow stair leads to a higher platform. You cannot see much of what's up there, except for two statues that appear to represent masses of intertwined tentacles and eel-like visages, and a huge altar of black stone from which rises a sculpted serpent, glaring toward the left. You think, but cannot be certain, that someone might be moving about behind that altar.

Two similar statues stand in front of the platform, on your own level.

The description assumes that Althanis has evacuated the worshipers through the secret door into area 8. The sounds of combat in area 5 (and possibly a fish-man fleeing from area 4) have alerted Althanis to the presence of intruders. If, however, the PCs did not allow the fish-man in area 4 to escape, they might catch the worshipers by surprise. If so, chamber 9 contains roughly a dozen kneeling worshipers, some of whom the PCs might recognize from town. (This includes Lena from the Bountiful Tide General Store,

and any remaining staff from the Smooth Sailing.) These worshipers are not combatants, and if the PCs burst in, they attempt to flee, either moving around the party or up the stairs toward the secret door. The PCs might try to stop them, or not, as they choose.

If the PCs enter area 9 within 3 minutes of the start of combat in area 5, they catch the worshipers on their way through the secret door. Thus, they need not search to find it later.

Finally, if the PCs enter by the secret door, the congregants flee (or have already fled, if the PCs triggered the trap) by the main door instead. In any case, if any worshipers are present, assume that it takes them 2d4 rounds to flee if the PCs do not try to stop them.

A PC whose passive Perception score beats a DC 19 (made so difficult due to both cover and the height difference between chambers) spots Althanis behind the altar. Four rounds after they enter, as soon as they set foot upon the stairs, or as soon as it becomes clear he has been spotted, Althanis speaks to them from above.

"My friends, please." The voice is that of an old man, old yet firm. It comes from above, from beyond the altar. Now that your attention has been drawn to him, you can indeed see an elder fellow, his gray hair long and stringy, standing by the basalt block. "There is no need for further violence. Join us. Pledge yourself to the Father of the Deep, and be greatly rewarded. Gold, jewels, and great magic can all be yours, as can forgiveness for those of the flock you have already slain. For Father Dagon is ever accepting."

The adventure assumes that the PCs refuse this "generous" offer, but they might attempt to bluff Althanis, pretending to acquiesce. However, if the

COMBAT AND WATER

This fight, and several encounters within the caverns, is waged partly on land, and partly in the water. For convenience, the most relevant rules are presented here.

When fighting underwater, the following modifiers apply. Assume that the first two modifiers also apply if a creature on land is making an attack against an underwater creature, with more than a single square of water between them.

✦ Creatures using powers with the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

✦ Characters using weapons from the spear and crossbow weapon groups take no penalties on attacks with those weapons. Characters using any other weapon take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

✦ Creatures move using their swim speed. A creature without a swim speed must use the Athletics skill to swim, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

✦ Aquatic: Creatures native to watery environments have the aquatic ability. They gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against opponents that do not have this ability. Aquatic monsters, such as sahuagin, are noted as such in their stat blocks.

PCs accept his offer, he demands that they shed their weapons and abase themselves before the altar of Dagon, so at best, a good bluff might allow them close to him before combat erupts.

If the PCs attempt to mount the steps without agreeing to Althanis's proposal, combat begins.

Tactical Encounter: The Altar of Dagon (page 97).

Questioning Althanis follows the same rules, and can reveal the same information, as questioning Sharallan in area 5.

S10. The Altar of Dagon

As you near the upper level, the contents of the room become clearer. The statues of tendrils writhe of their own accord, though this might be the result of the continual flames that flicker near them. The altar is an enormous chunk of blackness, as though carved from the night sky, and the serpent that rises from it is primordial, vicious, and angry. At the rear of the room, a pool of brackish water suggests bottomless depths.

Unless they've bluffed their way up or entered by the secret door, combat has most likely begun by the time the PCs reach this point.

The pool, labeled 10A, leads to an underground network of water-filled caves that eventually opens into the ocean at the base of the hill. It also leads to the pool at 11A.

The altar radiates overwhelming illusion magic. Any worshiper of Dagon who prays over the altar for 1 full hour gains benefits similar to those of the *misdirection* spell. They detect to all forms of magic as neutral, rather than chaotic evil. They also detect as nonmagical, making it difficult for others to determine that their alignments have been concealed. This effect lasts for six days.

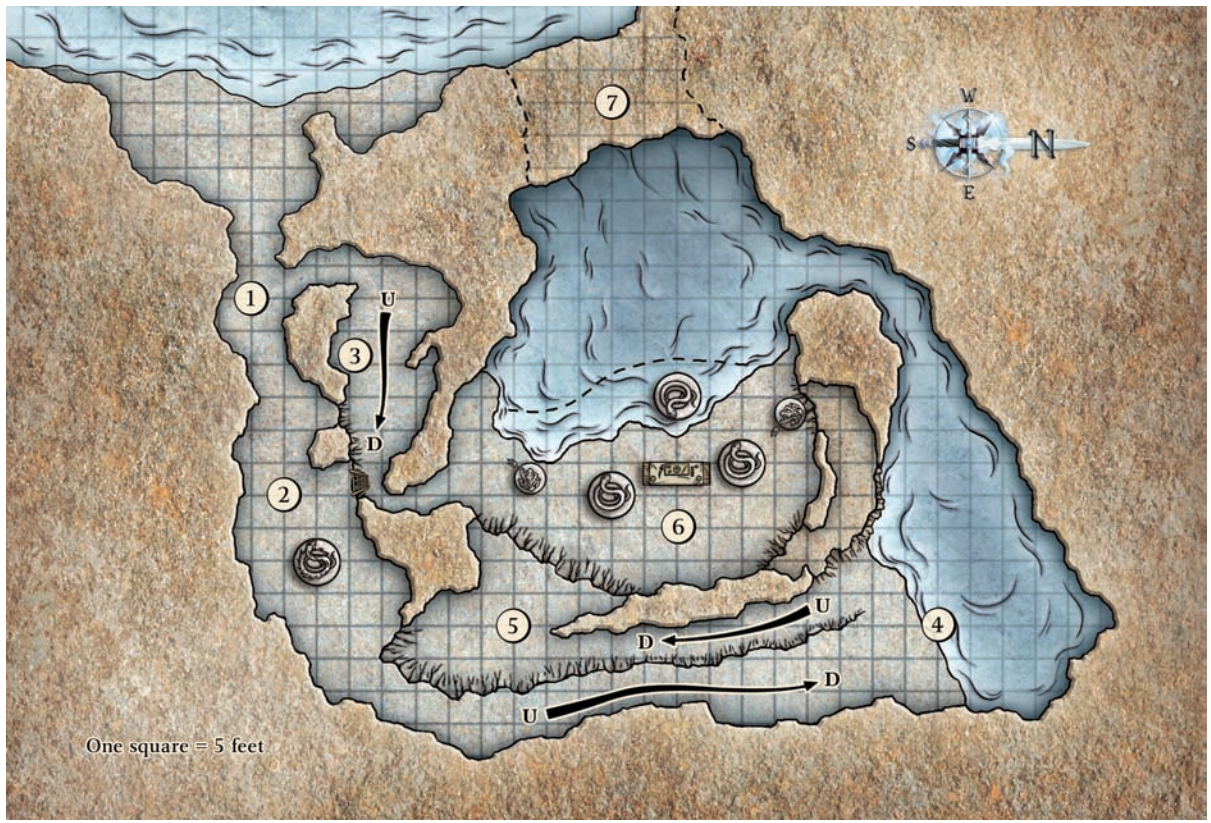
Tactical Encounter: The Altar of Dagon (page 97).

When the combat is complete, allow the PCs to make a DC 14 Perception check. Success indicates that they have discovered something truly horrific: One of the fish-men bears a tattoo of a gold leaf, scarcely visible beneath its scales. This horrendous abomination was once one of the Goldleaf guards who so recently sacrificed himself to the ocean! (If the PCs stopped all the guards from drowning themselves to date, omit this detail.)

S11. Meditation Chamber

Like the hallway outside, this chamber is covered on all surfaces with etchings of sea monsters. Here, however, the scent of the ocean is not imaginary, for a pool of brackish water stands in the far side of the room.

Althanis uses this chamber to meditate and to commune with Dagon's aquatic servants in a more private setting than the altar chamber. The pool at 11A connects to 10A, and (eventually) to the ocean.



Part Four: Confrontation

(Pre-Dawn Onward)

Even as you emerge from the shrine, any feelings of victory and triumph you might have are cut woefully short. From across the sea, that horrific call sounds yet again. Whatever is happening in this cursed town called Ashenport, it's not over yet.

Dagon's Call, Second Night

Again, run Dagon's Call as described above. If you don't wish to roll for those at the Smooth Sailing, assume that half the remaining warriors, and all but one of the others (Terza, Matthias, Jandal) succumb. Allow the PCs to deal with them, and any of their own, as they prefer.

The PCs might need to rest and regain spells. The Smooth Sailing Inn is the logical place to do so, but if they take reasonable precautions, they might find other safe spots. If they rest past noon, they might have to deal with yet another Call.

Whatever the case, their only hope of ending this for good is to enter the caves and destroy the true leader of the cult—the alien Voice of Dagon. They might have learned of these caves through questioning the priests in the shrine. If not, there are two further possibilities.

✦ If the PCs are out and about any time between morning and noon, a DC 14 passive Perception reveals a few of the townsfolk coming from the coast near area 12. If confronted, and if the PCs acquire at least 2 victories in the challenge, they admit that this is the spot from which the fish-men frequently come, and that they were going to seek guidance.

✦ If the PCs fail to find it themselves, one of the surviving visitors at the Smooth Sailing might report having seen the townsfolk there, as above.

Down the Cliffs

Regardless of how they learn of them, the PCs must approach the caves.

Some 25 feet below, the wrathful sea pounds against unyielding stone. Between the two, the territory over which they battle, is a tiny stretch of rocky beach. Every few moments, it vanishes briefly beneath the waves, only to reappear.

Climbing down the cliff-face requires a DC 20 Athletics check. Once the party is roughly 15 of the 25 feet down, they are attacked by one of Dagon's most horrible servants.

Tactical Encounter: The Wrath of Dagon (page 99).

The Coastal Caverns

These caves, filled with water and completely hidden except during this lowest tide, are the true heart of Dagon's cult. The walls are unworked stone, the ceilings anywhere from 8 to 20 feet high. Although several caverns are covered in deep water (and are marked as such on the map), *the entire* cavern is covered in water to a depth of a few inches. This has no mechanical impact (except where noted), but should remind the PCs that this is an alien environment. The PCs must provide their own illumination.

C1. The Earthen Gullet

Seawater flows in a shallow stream down the earthen floor of this cave, leading into the darkened maw of the earth.

The fish-men of Dagon have trapped the entrance to the caverns, as marked on the map. The trap is an early warning system that also pins intruders in place, using an adhesive distilled from various sea creatures. In addition, the trap causes a loud crash, alerting the inhabitants of C2 and C4 to the PCs' presence. They then converge, as described in the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: The Killing Caves (page 100).

C2. Resting Cave

This cavernous chamber has blackened walls, suggesting in the dim light that it goes on forever. What at first appears to be a great beast rearing from the darkness, a serpent of sharp angles and hideous spines, swiftly reveals itself to be a large idol standing near the far side of the cave.

Depending on how the PCs dealt with the trap, they might face only a pair of fish-men here, or they might have faced them, and the mouther from C4, already.

Tactical Encounter: The Killing Caves (page 100).

The passageway leading to C3 slopes gradually but consistently downward.

C3. Madness Made Manifest

Something is very wrong with this cave. The walls, the floor, and the ceiling are all coated in a reflective sheen, as though a great slug had left a trail across them. Even stranger is the stone. Although every other surface within these caverns appears to be water-carved stone, these surfaces boast strange patterns, unusually marred features, and even twisted curves and protrusions. It less resembles stone, and more a hollow in a large lump of clay, formed into random patterns by a child's eager fingers.

The strange patterns in the stone are the result of the gibbering mouther using its acid to reshape the cave to its alien liking. The floor in the center of the cavern slopes steeply downward.

As with the fish-men in C2, the mouther might be encountered here alone, or at C1, depending on circumstances, as described in the tactical encounter.

Tactical Map: The Killing Caves (page 100).

C4. Deep Water

The water rushing past your feet begins to pool ever deeper as the passage winds onward. Finally, the claustrophobic corridor opens into an enormous flooded cavern. It's going to require a bit of fancy footwork to work your way through without plunging into the dark and icy depths.

The entirety of this cavern is covered in water (dozens of feet deep where water is marked on the map, only 2 feet deep where it is not). The tendrils attack as soon as anyone comes within reach.

Tactical Encounter: Deep Water (page 102).

C5. The Overlook

This asymmetrical cavern overlooks another, larger chamber below. In that distant chamber, you can see a sequence of monstrous idols, a great basalt altar like that beneath the church, and a shallow lagoon, roughly 2 feet deep, that runs beneath the distant wall. A moderate slope leads down from your level to the grotto below.

From here, you can see an older woman, clad in black robes, moving around behind the altar.

Much of what the PCs see is an illusion. In addition to the illusory wall marked on the C6 map, there are others that might cause great harm to the PCs. The Perception DC to detect any of these illusions before physically touching them is 19.

✦ The "slope" leading to the lower level (C6) is a sheer drop of about 10 feet. Anyone trying to traverse the slope falls.

✦ The lagoon extends farther east than it appears. (The area between the true shore and the dotted line in the water *appears* to be solid land, thanks to a pair of castings of *hallucinatory item*.) Anyone stepping onto that area immediately sinks, and might be attacked by the Voice (see the tactical encounter).

✦ The "priestess" is a *hallucinatory creature*. If the PCs attack, call out, or take any action she could reasonably "notice," she appears to cover behind the statue that's emerging from the water. The Voice hopes this lures one or more of the PCs out into the lagoon.

Tactical Encounter: The Call of the Deep (page 103).

C6. The Lair of the Beast

This chamber of horrors becomes clearer as you progress inward. The two smaller idols are statues of the fish-men you've encountered, and their dark stone forms drip with a

thin sheen of oily water. The three larger images are great serpents, emerging from the earth or the water, and foul ichor oozes from their needlelike teeth. The basalt idol, slightly larger than that beneath the church, boasts a rising serpent as well, turned toward the right. It radiates an intense cold. The entire chamber smells horribly of rotting fish.

Again, bear in mind the illusory wall and the fact that the water is deeper than it appears. If the image of the woman hasn't yet retreated behind the statue, she does so now.

The altar radiates powerful divine magic to the *detect magic* ritual. If a recently drowned corpse is placed upon it, and a worshiper of Dagon then chants an hour's worth of prayers, the body returns to life as one of Dagon's fish-men. Thankfully, it requires only 20 damage to snap the serpent from the top, and this destroys the altar's magical abilities.

Combat begins when the PCs have spent 1d4 rounds in area 6, or when one enters the deep water.

Tactical Map: The Call of the Deep (page 103).

Treasure: The portion of the cult's wealth that has not yet been distributed or traded for more useful items is stored in the alcove hidden behind the illusion. . It consists of a *shield of protection* (level 3), 2 *potions of healing*, an ivory dolphin statuette worth 200 gp, and 90 gp in various coins.

Ad Hoc Experience: If the PCs destroy the altar (even if only by snapping off the serpent), grant them 500 XP as a minor quest reward.

C7. The Waterway

This broad underground passage leads from deep within the lagoon in C6, under the rear wall, and out to sea.

Concluding the Adventure

The moment the Voice of Dagon is slain, or 2d4 rounds after it escapes, read or paraphrase the following.

From within the water, from beyond the cavern walls, seemingly from beyond the borders of reality, you hear it. A hideous shriek, like the unearthly call you've heard so often since your arrival at Ashenport, but somehow changed. Somehow even worse . . .

It is a cry of rage, of fury unabated. Without pause, without breath, it continues, rises, until you can scarcely hear your own thoughts. On it goes, and on, for minutes on end, until you fear your very sanity must crumble beneath its weight.

And then, just like that, it is gone.

This more vicious sound does not entice the PCs in any way, and it requires them to make no saving throws. Rather, this last Call was directed, not at the outsiders, but at Dagon's cultists. The Prince of the Deep does not take kindly to failure, and his wrath is lethal. The PCs have successfully broken the back of Dagon's cult, but even they might be shocked at the extent of their victory. By the time they return to the surface, there's nobody left in Ashenport at all, except for any remaining survivors among the guests at the Smooth Sailing.

When the PCs return to the shore, read or paraphrase the following:

As though it, too, were a tool of the Prince of the Depths—and perhaps it was—the storm abates even as you watch. The pounding of the rain dies into a fine mist, and the clouds shatter like glass, allowing streams of sunlight to pour between them. And that light illuminates a town truly, finally dead. No sign of life remains at all, no trace of any of the town's demon-enthralled citizens. Nothing except a hundred lines of footprints in the muddy beach, footprints that finally disappear into the tides of the wrathful, raging sea . . .

Ambush in Ashenport

Encounter Level 6 (2,100 XP)

Setup

If the PCs pass through the eastern or southern edges of the square, have them roll initiative. Place the two mystic cultists (M) at the spots marked with a red **M**, and the four thuggish cultists at the spots marked with a **T**. If the PCs pass to the north or west, use the spots marked green M for the mystics.

2 mystic cultists (M)
4 thuggish cultists (T)

When the cultists attack, read:

Two men with wild eyes and wielding swords charge from around corners and out of the mists. Lurking behind them, barely visible, stand two others, chanting and gesturing.

Passive Perception Check

Remember to apply a -2 penalty to the party's passive Perception score, due to the rain.

DC 13: *Through the steady downpour, you spot a shadow of movement around two of the nearby corners!*

DC 17: *No, not just two. Half a dozen figures are moving around you through the rain.*

Tactics

The attackers have only a vague plan; they're mostly counting on surprise and numbers to do the job.

Round One: If the PCs are in one or two clumps, the mystic cultists both open up with *storm of the ocean lord*. Otherwise, one does so, while the other attacks with *Dagon's fang*.

Round Two: If they haven't both done so, the second mystic uses his *storm* attack. Otherwise, they both make *fang* attacks. All the thuggish cultists already in melee range attempt to use their *knock 'em flat* attack.

Round Three+: The cultists continue making melee and ranged attacks, using area attacks if and when they recharge.

4 Thuggish Cultists (T) **Level 8 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5
HP 107 **Bloodied** 53
AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Speed 6

Heavy Flail (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage.

Crossbow (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

Knock 'em Flat (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 2d6+8 damage, plus push 2 and knocked prone.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

2 Mystic Cultists (M) **Level 8 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 350 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 88 **Bloodied** 44
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21
Speed 6

Mace (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

Dagon's Fang (standard; at will)
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage.

Storm of the Ocean Lord (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Cold**
Area burst 2 within 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 cold damage and target is immobilized until the end of the cultist's next turn.

Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves to an adjacent square; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +12 vs. Will; push 4.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 21 (+9)

Features of the Area

Mud: Due to the heavy rains, all the roads of Ashenport are considered difficult terrain.

Rain: All creatures more than 1 square distant have concealment (-2 to attack rolls). Perception checks take a -2 penalty. The rain automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames.

Tree: A tree is an obstacle that occupies a square. It requires a DC 12 Athletics check to climb.

Walls: The PCs might wish to climb the walls of the nearby buildings to reach a mystic cultist. The walls require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb. Most of the buildings are between 2 or 4 squares high.

Conclusion

Once four of the cultists are slain, the survivors attempt to flee or surrender.

The Sea's Long Reach

Encounter Level 8 (1,600 XP)

Setup

Have the PCs roll for initiative, and provide the read-aloud text. Place the fish-men on either the red or green spots, whichever is more tactically advantageous based on the PCs' starting positions. (Do not mix and match, however; use all red or all green.) The fish-men attempt to attack with surprise, if at all possible.

2 fish-man warriors (F)
2 fish-man slayers (F)

When the fish-men attack, read:

Shambling toward you come nightmares vomited from the sea itself. Roughly humanoid, they are covered in viscous slime, shifting scales, and fishbelly white flesh. Their huge eyes never blink; their mouths gape and flex, but no sound emerges as they approach. They clutch rusty blades in their webbed hands.

Passive Perception Check

Remember to apply a –2 penalty to the party's passive Perception score, due to the rain.

DC 20: *A trio of humanoid figures appear in a flash of lightning, barely visible against the storm. They're humanoid, but your swift glimpse suggests that they're not at all human.*

DC 25: *Several other creatures lurk in the pouring rain and the shadows behind the first.*

Tactics

Dagon's fish-men are bestial, but effective, warriors.

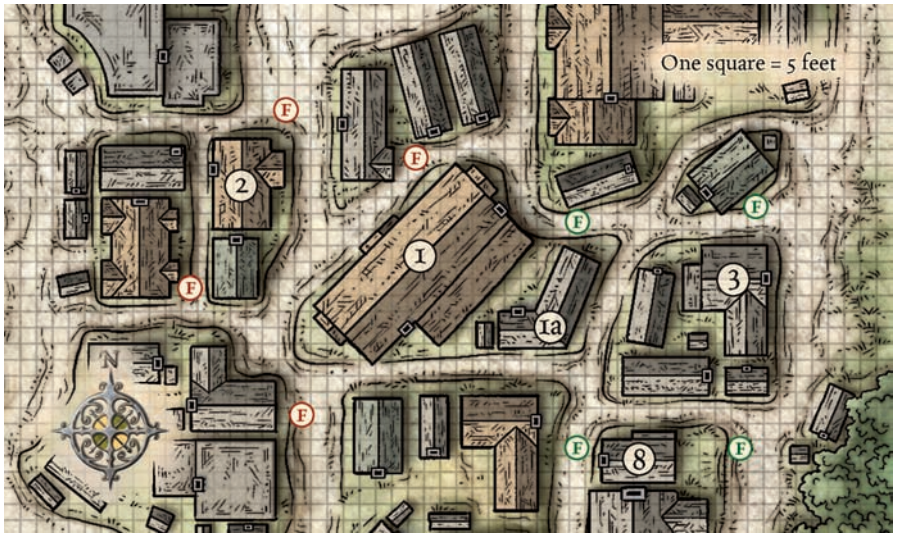
Round One: The fish-man slayers attempt to move in and make sneak attacks if they remain undetected. Otherwise, each moves to a separate opponent and readies an attack for when their allies move to flank. Two fish-man warriors move to attack the same PCs, assisting their allies with flanking. The third remains on a rooftop, making javelin attacks against the PCs.

Round Two+: As long as they can continue to do so effectively, the fish-men follow the tactics from the first round. The warriors change foes if necessary, using their slippery strike attack to maintain as many flanks with the slayers as they can. If the javelin thrower seems too hindered by the rain and determines that he cannot do much good where he is, he climbs down and joins the melee.

If two of them are slain, the others might fake a retreat, if they are positioned conveniently to a road or a doorway. They come back at the PCs several rounds later, attacking from a different direction.

Conclusion

The fish-men fight to the death, even going so far as to commit suicide (treat as a coup-de-grace) if it seems the only way to avoid capture.



3 Fish-Men of Dagon Warriors (F)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious)	XP 400 each
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attacks until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.	
HP 97	**Bloodied** 48
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20	
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*	
Speed 6, **swim** 8	
Rusty Rapier (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon** +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.	
Rusty Javelins (standard; at will) Ranged 10/20; +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6, plus 2 poison damage.	
Slippery Strike (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Weapon** +14 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage, plus 2 poison damage. The fish-man can shift 2 before or after the attack (but not both).	
Radiant Weakness Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon warrior to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.	
Slippery The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal
Str 16 (+7)	**Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

2 Fish-Men of Dagon Slayers (F)	Level 9 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious)	XP 400 each
Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision	
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attack rolls until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.	
HP 77 **Bloodied** 38	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20	
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*	
Speed 6, swim 8	
⨁ **Rusty Rapier** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon** +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.	
Lurking Strike Gain combat advantage against creatures that cannot see the fish-man at the start of its turn.	
Combat Advantage +1d8 damage with rusty rapier.	
Radiant Weakness Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon slayer to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.	
Slippery The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.	
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	
Skills Stealth +15	
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)	
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)	

Features of the Area

Mud: Due to the heavy rains, all the roads of Ashenport are considered difficult terrain.

Rain: All creatures more than 1 square distant have concealment (-2 to attack rolls). Perception checks take a -2 penalty. The rain automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames.

Walls: The PCs might wish to climb the walls of the nearby buildings. The walls require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb. Most of the buildings are between 1 and 2 stories (2 or 4 squares) high.

Beyond the Door

Encounter Level 8 (1,600 XP)

Setup

Four of the fish-men lurk in wait here, allowing worshipers to pass but ambushing outsiders. The slayers begin at the spots marked, but move into the room once combat begins. As soon as a PC opens any of the doors, read the text below and roll initiative. Odds are good that the fish-men act in the surprise round.

4 fish-man slayers (S)

When the PCs open the door, read:

Immediately from the shadows beyond the door, a rusty blade strikes down at you, grasped in a webbed, scaly fist! At that precise moment, the room's other doors fly open as well, and additional fishy creatures lunge at you with weapons held high.

Perception Check

DC 25: *Through the silence, you just barely make out the sound of something moving behind one of the doors.*

Tactics

The fish-men aren't looking for a drawn-out fight here. Their goal is to do a lot of damage up-front, and then sound the alarm.

Round One: The slayers attempt to attack as many PCs as they can while maintaining surprise and or combat advantage. They move swiftly into the room, either attacking surprised PCs, or moving to flank.

Round Two: One of the fish-men might, if it seems appropriate, slip back into the bedroom at S2 and then hide, hoping to lure a PC after it and then sneak attack him. (If this tactic fails, the fish-man reenters the battle in round three: either through the main door, or through the secret door through 1A, if that seems more likely to provide a flank or a surprise.) Another fish-man attempts to retreat through the door to S3. The others gang up on anyone who attempts to stop him, readying actions if necessary.

Round Three: A second fish-man attempts to escape, this time to S5. Again, the remainder move to keep anyone from stopping him.

Round Four+: The remaining slayers fight to the death.

4 Fish-Men of Dagon Slayers (S)	Level 9 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious)	XP 400 each
Initiative +14	**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attack rolls until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.	
HP 77	**Bloodied** 38
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20	
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*	
Speed 6, swim 8	
(+) **Rusty Rapier** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon** +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.	
Lurking Strike Gain combat advantage against creatures that cannot see the fish-man at the start of its turn.	
Combat Advantage +1d8 damage with rusty rapier.	
Radiant Weakness Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon slayer to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.	
Slippery The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal
Skills Stealth +15	
Str 16 (+7)	**Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

Conclusion

If the fish-man fleeing to area 3 escapes, the PCs face him again in area 10. The one fleeing to area 5 faces them again in that room. Because retreat is part of their plan, as opposed to a sign of defeat, award the PCs only half the normal experience for a fish-man who escapes.

Features of the Area

Beds (S2): It requires an extra square of movement to step onto a bed. A bed can be turned upright, requiring a DC 12 Strength check, and used for cover.

Doors: Characters can fight from behind the doors and gain cover.

Stairs, Spiral (S1, S3): Characters gain cover against foes below them on spiral stairs because they can easily duck around the staircase's central support.

Stairs, Steep (S3, S4): Steep stairs qualify as difficult terrain. Any creature subject to a push, pull, or slide effect down the stairs falls an additional square and must make an immediate save or fall prone.

The Pool

Encounter Level 9 (2,100 or 2,450 XP)

Setup

Given the sounds of battle from S4, it's all but impossible for the PCs to surprise the inhabitants herein (unless they enter by the secret door, in which case you should adjust your description accordingly). Combat begins as soon as the PCs enter the room; read aloud the appropriate text and roll initiative. The spots marked on the map for Sharallan (**P**), Ritter (**R**), the thuggish cultists (**T**), and the fish-man slayers (**S**) are starting points only; they might well have moved by the time the PCs first see them.

Sharallan, Priestess of Dagon (P)
Alderman Ritter, mystic cultist (R)
3 thuggish cultists (T)
1 fish-man of Dagon slayer (S)*

*** If a fish-man escaped to S5 from the battle at S4, there are two present here, not just one.**

When the fish-men and thugs move to attack, read (adjusting as necessary if the number of fish-men present varies):

Accompanied by [another/two] of the horrible, pallid fish-men, a quartet of townsfolk converge upon you. They hold their flails high, and their eyes burn with fanaticism.

When the casters first take action, read:

The curtain bisecting the room ripples, and you see a pair of faces appear around its edges. One is male, one female, and both move their lips in a sonorous, disturbing chant.

Tactics

The defenders here are prepared for battle, and they are determined to make the PCs pay for their gall at invading the shrine!

Round One: The thuggish cultists move in on the party, hoping perhaps to catch them before they've all come through the door. The fish-man (or fish-men) moves to flank opposite them. Sharallan and Ritter attack from around the curtain—using either ranged or area attacks, as befits the positioning of the PCs and their own allies—and then disappear behind it, taking advantage of what protection it offers.

Sharallan, Cult of Dagon Priestess (P) Level 8 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid XP 700
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 176 **Bloodied** 88
AC 24; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1
Mace (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.
Dagon's Fang (standard; at will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage.
Dagon's Maw (standard; at will) ✦ **Psychic**
Make two *Dagon's fang* attacks.
Deathly Storm (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Cold**
Area burst 2 within 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 cold damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Sharallan's next turn.
Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves to an adjacent square; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +12 vs. Will; push 4.
Horrific Repulsion (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Sharallan recharges and immediately uses *ring of terror.*
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +10
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 21 (+9)

Round Two+: As long as the PCs don't move behind the curtain (or destroy it), the casters continue using it as concealment. The others continue to gang up on them, using their encounter abilities as soon as possible. (A cultist might attempt to pull a bookcase down on a PC if the circumstances permit). All but Sharallan fight to the death.

Alderman Ritter (R) Level 8 Controller
Medium natural humanoid XP 350
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 70 **Bloodied** 35
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21
Speed 6
Mace (standard; at will)
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.
Dagon's Fang (standard; at will)
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage.
Storm of the Ocean Lord (standard; recharge ⚃) ✦ **Cold**
Area burst 2 within 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 cold damage and target is immobilized until the end of the cultist's next turn.
Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves to an adjacent square; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +12 vs. Will; push 4.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9
Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 21 (+9)

Features of the Room

Bookcases: The bookcases can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check. The two smaller ones can be pulled over with a DC 15 Strength check, while the larger can be pulled over with a DC 19 Strength check. A falling bookcase makes a +12 vs. Reflex attack against anyone in an adjacent shaded area. On a hit, they deal 2d6 damage, and the target is knocked prone and immobilized (save ends, and this saving throw gains a +2 circumstance bonus). Characters

3 Thuggish Cultists (T) Level 8 Brute
Medium natural humanoid XP 350 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +5
HP 107 **Bloodied** 53
AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Speed 6

⨺ **Heavy Flail** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage.

⨺ **Crossbow** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

⨺ **Knock 'em Flat** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 2d6+8 damage, plus push 2 and knocked prone.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9

Str 22 (+10)	**Dex** 16 (+7)	**Wis** 13 (+5)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 10 (+4)

1 or 2 Fish-Men of Dagon Slayers (S) Level 9 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious) XP 400 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attack rolls until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.
HP 77 **Bloodied** 38
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*
Speed 6, swim 8

⨺ **Rusty Rapier** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.

Lurking Strike
Gain combat advantage against creatures that cannot see the fish-man at the start of its turn.

Combat Advantage
+1d8 damage with rusty rapier.

Radiant Weakness
Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon slayer to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.

Slippery
The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Skills Stealth +15

Str 16 (+7)	**Dex** 22 (+10)	**Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 10 (+4)

who successfully save immediately move to the nearest nonshaded square.

Curtain: The thick curtain has AC, Reflex, and Fortitude defenses of 2, and 5 hit points.

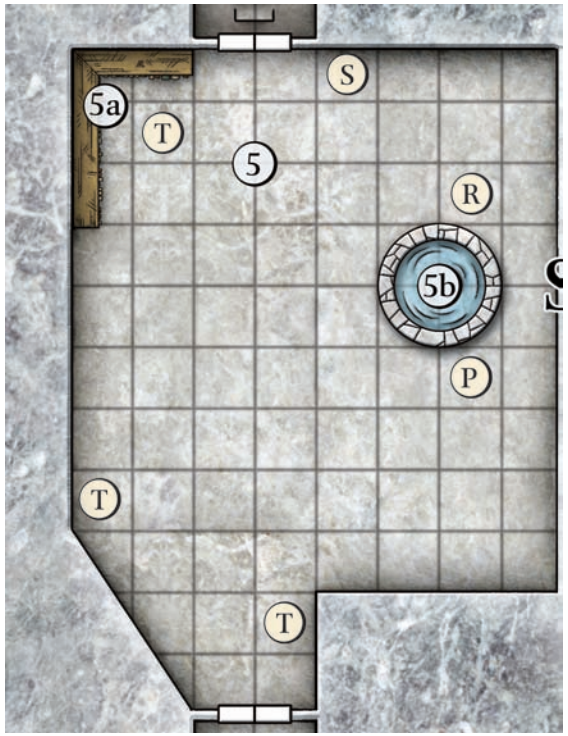
It costs 1 square of movement to move through the curtain. It blocks line of sight, except for those standing at the very edges (who can look around it).

The curtain can be pulled down with a DC 10 Strength check. The curtain makes a +12 vs. Reflex attack against anyone adjacent to the curtain on one side (chosen by the puller). On a hit, the target is immobilized and blind until the end of its next turn.

Pool: It costs 1 square of movement to step up onto the rim of the pool. The shallow water qualifies as difficult terrain.

Conclusion

Sharallan fights until reduced to 10 hit points and then attempts to escape. She does not, however, make use of the secret door; she knows that it's more than her life is worth to lead the PCs to the hidden passage and the fleeing parishioners.



The Hidden Hall

Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP)

Setup

The PCs trigger not one, but a pair of traps, when they enter the shaded area. Read aloud the appropriate text and roll initiative. The blue indicates squares subject to the venomous floor trap, whereas the spot marked **P** indicates the focus point for the phantasmal maw's trap.

Phantasmal maw (P)
Venomous floor (blue squares)

When phantasmal maw triggers, read:

A spot on the wall—a tiny stretch of stone, amid a trio of twisting eels—suddenly glows with an ugly blue radiance. From it fly a quartet of ghostly images.

When the venomous floor triggers, read:

A sudden "snick" sounds out from the floor beneath you, and a trio of tiny, dripping spines jut forth.

Phantasmal Maw **Level 10 Elite Lurker**
Trap XP 1,000

A trigger lets loose four motes of animated acid, taking the form of phantom beasts of the deep sea.

Trap: This trap triggers the first time someone comes within 4 squares of the focus point, and it attacks living creatures each round.

Perception
✦ **DC 19:** The character notices the trap's trigger.

Additional Skill: Religion
✦ **DC 14:** This trap is focused where several particularly important icons of Dagon merge together along the wall. A character who succeeds at this check identifies the focus and its relationship to the motes.
• **DC 19:** The party gains a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.

Initiative +7

Trigger
The trap releases the maws and rolls initiative when a creature enters the protected area. These traps are enchanted to recognize the devotees of a particular deity so that their presence doesn't trigger the trap. Each maw can move with a fly speed of 10 to reach its chosen target on its turn.

Attack
Standard Action **Melee** 1
Target: Each mote attacks one random living creature with line of effect to the focus object
Attack: +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 5 acid damage and slowed until the end of the maw's next turn. If the target is already slowed, it takes an additional 1d8 acid damage.

Countermeasures
✦ An adjacent character can delay the trigger with a DC 16 Thievery check.
✦ An adjacent character can disable the trigger with a DC 21 Thievery check.
✦ A character can attack a mote (AC 22, other defenses 22). If the mote takes fire or cold damage, it vanishes until the end of the attacker's next turn, negating its attack that round.
✦ A character can attack the focus spot on the wall, attempting to mar the unholy sigils (AC 22, other defenses 19; hp 75). Destroying the focus disables the trap.

Venomous Floor Level 10 Elite Obstacle
Trap XP 1,000

A stretch of hallway is lined with hidden needles that shoot forth from the gaps in the carvings (usually the mouths).

Trap: Needles attack any creature that enters or begins its turn in a trapped square.

Perception
✦ **DC 19:** The character can discern all adjacent needle holes.

Additional Skill: Religion
✦ **DC 21:** The character identifies the important areas in Dagon's iconography, granting the party a +2 bonus to Perception checks to notice the trapped squares.

Trigger
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks that creature.

Attack
Opportunity Action **Melee** 1
Target: Creature on a trapped plate
Attack: +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 6 poison damage and the target is immobilized until the beginning of its next turn.
Miss: Half damage and slowed until the end of its next turn.

Countermeasures
✦ A character who makes a successful Athletics check (DC 5, or DC 10 without a running start) can jump over a single plate.
✦ An adjacent character can delay a trigger plate with a DC 10 Thievery check.
✦ An adjacent character can disable a trigger plate with a DC 21 Thievery check.

Tactics

The phantasmal maws pursue characters up to 10 squares beyond the shaded area.

Features of the Room

Stairs, Steep: Steep stairs qualify as difficult terrain. Any creature subject to a push, pull, or slide effect down the stairs moves an additional square and must make an immediate save or fall prone.

The Altar of Dagon

Encounter Level 10 (2,750 XP)

Setup

Althanis and his under-priest stand at the altar where they conducted the service, ready to smite the infidels who have defiled Dagon's shrine. Read aloud the appropriate text, place Althanis (**A**), the mystic cultist (M), the fish-men slayers (**S**), and the fish-men warriors (**W**) as marked. The PCs cannot catch their foes by surprise here (unless they enter through the secret door, in which case they can see the fish-men clearly, and you should alter your descriptions accordingly).

Althanis, High Priest (A)
1 mystic cultist (M)
2 fish-man warriors (W)
2 fish-man slayers (S)

When combat begins, read:

The old man and another, clad in deep blue robes, gesture toward you. From behind the statues, a number of the flapping, sopping fish-men emerge.

When Althanis is first injured, read:

The old priest suddenly erupts, as though something within struggled to escape. Flesh twists and splits, and his entire body forms a mass of writhing, skin-covered tentacles.

Passive Perception Check

DC 15: *A quick flicker of movement suggests that two of the statues—one on the lower level, one above—conceal figures lurking behind them.*

DC 17: *And there, more movement! All four statues conceal someone lurking in the shadows around them.*

Tactics

This is the heart of their domain, and the zealots are not going down easily. The fish-men make use of the statues' teleportation abilities if doing so allows them to attack more efficiently.

Round One: The fish-men converge on the PCs. The slayers attempt to attack from concealment or with surprise if possible. If they cannot, they move to flank PCs with the warriors. They attempt to remain at the periphery, allowing the priests to use area effects on the bulk of the PCs. The mystic cultist starts with his *storm of the ocean lord* attack, but Althanis first tries to either blind two of the PCs with *Dagon's flame* (if he goes before his fish-man slayers), or he uses *Dagon's fang*. He and the mystic cultist use the altar or the statues as cover, but they do not remain next to one another.

Round Two+: As long as the PCs remain on the ground level, the fish-men continue to harry them

Mystic Cultist (M) **Level 8 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 350

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7
HP 88 **Bloodied** 44
AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21
Speed 6

Mace (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

Dagon's Fang (standard; at will)
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage.

Storm of the Ocean Lord (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Cold**
Area burst 2 within 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 cold damage and target is immobilized until the end of the cultist's next turn.

Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves to an adjacent square; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1, triggering enemy only; +12 vs. Will; push 4.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 13 (+5)	**Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 21 (+9)

Althanis, High Priest of Dagon's Cult (A) Level 9 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium elemental humanoid XP 800

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
Dagon's Blessing aura 2; allies that begin their turns in this area gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the start of their next turn
HP 194 **Bloodied** 97
AC 25; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Mace (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

Dagon's Fang (standard; at will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 6 psychic damage.

Dagon's Flame (standard; at will) ✦ **Radiant**
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Fortitude; the target is pushed 1 and blinded until the end of Althanis's next turn.

Dagon's Maw (standard; at will)
Make two *Dagon's fang* attacks, two *Dagon's flame* attacks, or one of each.

Winding Serpents (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚄ ⚅) • **Necrotic**
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage, and phantom serpents wind about the target, restraining the target until the end of its next turn.

Command (standard; encounter) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of Althanis's next turn, and the target slides 4 or is knocked prone.

Ring of Terror (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1, triggering target only; +13 vs. Will; the target is pushed 4.

Horrific Repulsion (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Fear**
Althanis recharges and immediately uses his *ring of terror.*

Horrid Form (immediate reaction, when first injured in combat; encounter) ✦ **Polymorph**
Althanis takes on the form of a grotesque mass of rubbery, squidlike flesh with numerous writhing tendrils. All enemies take a -1 penalty to melee and ranged attacks against Althanis in this form until he is bloodied. Despite the alien appearance, his other abilities remain unchanged.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Skills Religion +9

Str 10 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+6)	**Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 22 (+10)

2 Fish-Men of Dagon Slayers (S) Level 9 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious) XP 400 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attack rolls until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.
HP 77 **Bloodied** 38
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*
Speed 6, swim 8

Rusty Rapier (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.

Lurking Strike
Gain combat advantage against creatures that cannot see the fish-man at the start of its turn.

Combat Advantage
+1d8 damage with rusty rapier.

Radiant Weakness
Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon slayer to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.

Slippery
The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Skills Stealth +15
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

2 Fish-Men of Dagon Warriors (W) Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious) XP 400 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attacks until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.
HP 97 **Bloodied** 48
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*
Speed 6, **swim** 8

Rusty Rapier (standard; at will) • **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.

Rusty Javelins (standard; at will)
Ranged 10/20; +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6, plus 2 poison damage.

Slippery Strike (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage, plus 2 poison damage. The fish-man can shift 2 before or after the attack (but not both).

Radiant Weakness
Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon warrior to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.

Slippery
The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

while the priests make ranged attacks from up top. Althanis unleashes his *winding serpents* attack only when at least two or three PCs are in range. If a lone PC draws near him, he uses *command* to knock them back—preferably over the edge, if at all possible.

Features of the Area

Altar: The stone altar has AC and Reflex defenses of 3, a Fortitude defense of 15, and 200 hit points. It is attached to the floor, and far too heavy to move. It requires an extra square of movement to step up onto the altar. It provides cover to anyone behind it. Due to the altar's dark energy, all adjacent characters take a -1 penalty to attack rolls with divine powers (unless they are worshipers of Dagon).

Ledge: The ledge is roughly 2 squares in height, and it requires a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

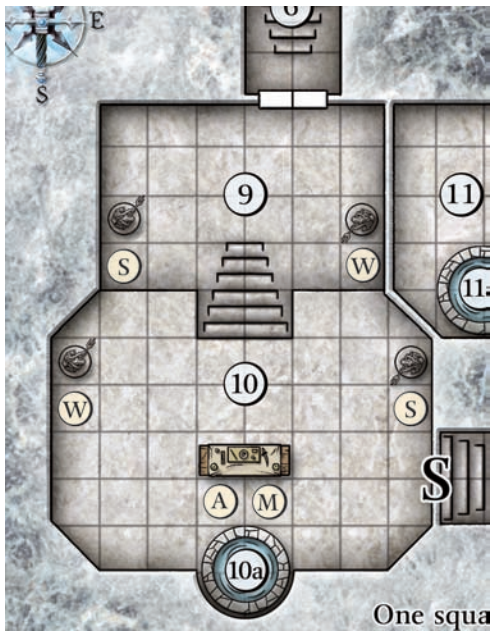
Pool: This water is deep. It requires only a DC 10 Athletics check to swim, but it is dark even a mere few feet below the surface, requiring illumination.

Stairs, Steep: Steep stairs qualify as difficult terrain. Any creature subject to a push, pull, or slide effect down the stairs falls an additional square and must make an immediate save or fall prone.

Statues, Medium: The statues have AC and Reflex defenses of 5, a Fortitude defense of 10, and 40 hit points. They can be pushed over with a DC 19 Strength check. A falling statue makes a +11 vs. Reflex attack against a character in a single adjacent square (chosen by the one pushing it over). A hit deals 2d6 + 2 damage and knocks the target prone. The square becomes difficult terrain. The statues in this chamber are mystically linked. Anyone standing adjacent to one can use a move action to teleport adjacent to any of the others. A character who spends 1 full round adjacent to a statue, or who sees someone else make use of the teleportation effect, automatically knows how to do so. A statue that has been pushed over loses this ability.

Conclusion

The fish-men fight to the death. If Althanis is reduced to 25 hit points, he attempts to flee. His true objective is not escape; he hopes to ambush the PCs on their way out. Feel free to stage this combat anywhere in the shrine. This time, Althanis fights to the death.



The Wrath of Dagon

Encounter Level 8

Setup

Allow the PCs to place themselves. The Wrath emerges either at the spot marked **W**, or from one square to either side, depending on what is most advantageous based on the PCs' positions.

Wrath of Dagon (W)

When the Wrath of Dagon attacks, read:

An abomination explodes from the surf. Clacking claws, writhing legs, wriggling antennae—it surges to attack!

Passive Perception Check

Apply a –2 penalty to the PCs' passive Perception scores, due to the rain.

DC 21: *Something grotesque moves beneath the surface of the water, making a beeline for the shore!*

Tactics

Dagon's worshipers aren't pulling any more punches. The Wrath is a foul beast that serves at the demon lord's whim, and its only purpose is to kill.

Round One: The Wrath leaps from the sea to attack PCs who are still climbing. It initiates combat with *wrathful pheromone*. It immediately spends an action point to attack again.

Round Two: If at least a few PCs succumbed to the *wrathful pheromone*, the Wrath of Dagon focuses its attacks on a single PC. If multiple active PCs surround it, it instead launches a *somnolent pheromone* burst, hoping to put some of them out. It then spends its second action point and initiates a grab attack against an isolated PC.

Wrath of Dagon (W)	**Level 10 Solo Soldier**
Medium elemental magical beast (amphibious)	XP 2,500
Initiative +10	**Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
Disorienting Pheromone aura 5; creatures that begin their turn in this aura take a –1 penalty to Will defense and a –2 penalty to Perception checks (save ends)	
HP 415; **Bloodied** 207	
Regeneration 5	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25	
Resist 10 poison; see also *radiant weakness*	
Saving Throws +4	
Speed 8, climb 4, swim 8; see also *leaping horror*	
Action Points 2	
⊕ **Claw** (standard; at will) ✦ **Poison** +17 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison (save ends).	
⸸ **Snapping Claws** (standard; at will) ✦ **Poison** Make two *claw* attacks.	
✧ **Fearful Pheromone** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fear** Close burst 3; +15 vs. Will; the target is pushed 4 and takes a –2 penalty to all attack rolls (save ends).	
✧ **Somnolent Pheromone** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Sleep** Close burst 1; +15 vs. Will; the target falls asleep (save ends); any damage immediately awakens the target.	
✧ **Wrathful Pheromone** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Charm** Close burst 3; +15 vs. Will; the target must use a standard action on its next turn to make a basic attack against its nearest ally. If no ally is within range of a basic attack, the target loses its standard action for that round.	
Leaping Horror The Wrath can make long and high jumps as though it had a running start even if it does not, and even if leaping from the water. It also gains a +5 racial bonus to Athletics checks made to jump.	
Radiant Weakness Radiant effects cause the wrath of Dagon to take a –2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal
Skills Athletics +16	
Str 22 (+11)	**Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 19 (+9)
Con 22 (+11)	**Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+7)

Round Three: If it can maintain the grab, the Wrath leaps back into the water, taking the grabbed PC with it.

Round Four+: The Wrath uses its *fearful pheromone* to keep the PCs from interfering with its attempts to drown or kill a companion.

Features of the Area

Cliff: The cliff is roughly 25 feet (5 squares) from top to bottom. It requires a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Mud: Due to the rains, the beach is difficult terrain.

Rain: All creatures more than 1 square distant have concealment (–2 to attacks). Perception checks take a –2 penalty. The rain extinguishes unprotected flames.

Tide: The tide here is violent and unpredictable. Treat it as a ranged attack against all creatures on the ground, with a recharge of 6 on a d6. The tide goes first in any round where it "attacks." Roll a +14 vs. Reflex attack; on a hit, the target is knocked prone. The Wrath gains a +2 racial bonus to its Reflex defense against this attack, due to its insectoid and aquatic nature.

Conclusion

The Wrath of Dagon fights to the death.

The Killing Caves

Encounter Level 10 (2,900 XP)

Setup

This is potentially the most brutal fight the PCs have faced to date—one that might well repulse them from the caves if they're not careful. The darkly shaded squares indicate the squares that can trigger the trap; the lightly shaded squares indicate additional squares that are attacked when the trap activates.

Once combat begins, read aloud the appropriate text and roll initiative. Place the fish-man slayers (**S**), the fish-man warriors (**W**), and the gibbering mouther (**G**) on the spots as marked. The mouther is on the ceiling, not the floor.

1 burning adhesive (shaded squares)
3 fish-man slayers (S)
2 fish-man warriors (W)
1 gibbering mouther (G)

When the PCs trigger the trap, read:

With the sound of creaking metal, a caustic and foul-smelling slime pours down on you from the darkened ceiling above!

When the PCs spot the fish-men, read:

From the darkness of the cave emerge several of the grotesque ichthyan humanoids. Their eyes and mouths gape as they shuffle through the ankle-deep water.

When the PCs detect the gibbering mouther, read:

A terrible, high-pitched cackling rises from the depths, all but drowning out the crashing tide. Slithering and flopping across the cavern's ceiling appears a repulsive mass of bulging flesh, wide and red-veined eyes, and gaping mouths.

Passive Perception Check

Use the passive Perception check to determine if the PCs spot the fish-men converging on them once they've triggered the trap. If they make it through the trap without triggering it, the fish-men aren't expecting them, and thus aren't hiding.

DC 20: *Thankfully, there appear to be only two of the loathsome fish creatures at this time.*

3 Fish-Men of Dagon Slayers (S)	**Level 9 Lurker**
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious)	XP 400 each

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attack rolls until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.
HP 77 **Bloodied** 38
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also radiant weakness
Speed 6, swim 8

⊕ **Rusty Rapier** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.

Lurking Strike
Gain combat advantage against creatures that cannot see the fish-man at the start of its turn.

Combat Advantage
+1d8 damage with rusty rapier.

Radiant Weakness
Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon slayer to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.

Slippery
The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Skills Stealth +15

Str 16 (+7)	**Dex** 22 (+10)	**Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+4)	**Cha** 10 (+4)

DC 25: *Or no, not just two. You couldn't be that lucky. Three others carefully move toward you through the shadows of the cave.*

Tactics

If the PCs trigger the trap, the fish-men and the gibbering mouther converge on them immediately.

Burning Adhesive	**Level 9 Warder**
Trap	XP 400

A great gong sounds off in the distance as a cascade of acidic, sticky liquid flows down from above.

Trap: Tripwires hidden in the contours of the stone floor dump a vat of acidic and highly sticky goo upon those in the target area. Only a character standing in a darkly shaded square risks triggering the trap, but anyone in a dark or light shaded square can be attacked by it. In addition to releasing the adhesive, the trap sounds a great gong when triggered.

Perception
✦ **DC 19:** The character notices a tripwire, which allows him or her to bypass one of the trapped squares.
Additional Skill: Dungeoneering
✦ **DC 14:** The character recognizes that some of the contours of the earth have been deliberately chipped and expanded. The party gains a +2 bonus to Perception checks to spot the tripwires.

Trigger
When a creature enters or begins its turn in a trapped square, the trap attacks.

Attack
Opportunity Action **Burst**
Target: All creatures in shaded squares.
Attack: +12 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + 5 acid damage and restrained until save.
Aftereffect of hit: Slowed until save.

Countermeasure
✦ An adjacent character who has spotted a tripwire can jump over the trapped square with a DC 5 (or 10 without a running start) Athletics check.
✦ An adjacent character can delay the trigger, of that square only, with a DC 19 Thievery check.
✦ An adjacent character can disable the trigger, of that square only, with a DC 21 Thievery check.

2 Fish-Men of Dagon Warriors (W) Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium elemental humanoid (amphibious) XP 400 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
Vile Stench aura 2; creatures who begin their turn in the area take a -2 to all attacks until the start of their next turn; this is a poison effect.
HP 97 **Bloodied** 48
AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20
Resist 5 acid, 5 cold, 5 poison; see also *radiant weakness*
Speed 6, **swim** 8

(+) **Rusty Rapier** (standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 2 poison damage.

(+) **Rusty Javelins** (standard; at will)
Ranged 10/20; +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6, plus 2 poison damage.

Slippery Strike (standard; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage, plus 2 poison damage. The fish-man can shift 2 before or after the attack (but not both).

Radiant Weakness
Radiant effects cause a fish-man of Dagon warrior to take a -2 penalty to attacks until the start of the fish-man's next turn.

Slippery
The fish-man gains a +2 racial bonus to all rolls to escape a grab, and to saving throws against immobilization and restraint.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Str 16 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)

If the PCs succeed in disarming it before they trigger it, however, combat begins only when they first come into sight of one of their opponents. In this instance, the sound of battle calls the opponents from the other chambers in 2 rounds. The tactics as presented here assume that the PCs triggered the trap.

Round One: The fish-men attempt to flank PCs, or attack using surprise.

The gibbering mouther approaches on the ceiling and unleashes a gibbering attack (to which the fish-men, as allies and creatures of Dagon, are immune). If, however, it cannot catch more than one PC in the attack this round, it double-moves and gibbers next round.

Modified Gibbering Mouther Level 10 Controller
Medium aberrant magical beast XP 500

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +4; all-around vision, darkvision
Warped Ground aura 3; enemies treat the area within the aura as diffi cult terrain.
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55
AC 22; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 19
Speed 5, climb 5, swim 5

(+) **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ Acid
+15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Gibbering (free, once on its turn before it takes other actions; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +12 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the gibbering mouther's next turn.

Gibbering Feast (standard; recharge ⚃) ✦ Acid
Close burst 5; unnatural mouths appear on dazed creatures in the burst and bite them; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 18 (+9)

Round Two+: The fish-men continue to fight as above; they are coordinated, but rarely cooperate directly with the mouther.

The round after it makes its gibbering attack, the mouther drops from the ceiling to the floor and then continues its movement, making *gibbering feast* attacks.

Throughout the battle, the fish-men take advantage of the various passages and outcroppings in the caves, taking cover from attacks and then sneaking back around in hopes of attacking from concealment.

Conclusion

The fish-men are too fanatical, and the mouther too stupidly predatory, to retreat. They all fight to the death.

Features of the Area

Ladder: The ladder requires no check to climb, but requires 4 squares of movement to fully traverse.

Slope, Steep: The slope is difficult terrain to anyone moving up, but not down. Any creature subject to a push, pull, or slide effect down the slope falls an additional square and must make an immediate save or fall prone.

Statues, Large: The statues have AC and Reflex defenses of 4, a Fortitude defense of 12, and 80 hit points. Climbing a statue requires a DC 15 Athletics check. They can be pushed over with a DC 19 Strength check. A falling statue makes a +12 vs. Reflex attack against characters in two adjacent square (in a line chosen by the one pushing the statue). A hit deals 2d6 + 4 damage and knocks the target prone. The squares become difficult terrain.

Deep Water

Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

Setup

The tendrils attack as soon as the PCs pass within reach. Read aloud the appropriate text, roll initiative, and place the tendrils of Dagon (**T**) as marked.

4 tendrils of Dagon (T)

When the PCs come within 10 feet of any tendril, read:

A writhing mass of tentacles, far too numerous to belong to any natural creature of a sane and rational world, breaks the surface of the water.

Passive Perception Check
DC 19: *It's all but impossible to see what they might be, but several large shapes lurk beneath the deep water, almost concealed by the shadow and the constant motion of the surface.*

Tactics

The tendrils aren't smart, they're not clever—but they *are* hungry.

Round One+: The tendrils remain in the deep water, attempting to use their reach to drag PCs toward them, to bite or drown them. They stay beneath the surface where possible, for added protection against ranged attacks.

Features of the Area

Slope, Gradual: Characters cannot use the run action when moving upslope.

Water, Deep: Characters moving into this water must swim. Due to the choppiness of the water and the movement of the tides and the creatures within, this requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Water, Shallow: The shallow water qualifies as difficult terrain.

Conclusion

A tendril attempts to jet away, hidden by an ink cloud, if reduced to 15 hit points.

4 Tendrils of Dagon (T)	**Level 10 Controller**
Medium elemental beast (aquatic)	XP 500 each
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 107; **Bloodied** 53	
AC 24; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20	
Resist 10 poison	
Swim 10	
(standard; at will) **Tentacles**	
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; target is grabbed.	
Threatening Reach	
This creature can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
(minor; at will) **Beak**	
Grabbed targets only; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.	
(minor; at will) **Drag**	
Grabbed targets only; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is pulled 2 squares.	
(standard; encounter) **Ink Cloud** ✦ **Poison**	
Close burst 3; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d11 + 4 poison damage. *Aftereffect:* The cloud provides concealment, and it remains until the start of the tendril's next turn.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** None
Str 22 (+11)	**Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+6)
Con 19 (+9)	**Int** 3 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Encounter Level

The tendrils' great reach synergizes well with the deep water, adding an additional 500 XP to the value of the encounter.

The Call of the Deep

Encounter Level 10

Setup

This is it: The PCs have finally reached the grotesquely beating heart of Dagon's cult, an alien, demonic horror known as the Voice of Dagon. Read aloud the appropriate text and roll initiative. The Voice *seems* to appear at the spot marked with a red **V**. This is another *hallucinatory creature*; the true Voice sits deeper, at the spot marked with a green V. The guardian demons (**G**) appear to be hybrid horrors, like the Wrath of Dagon, but they're mezzaloths for all intents and purposes.

Voice of Dagon (V)
3 guardian demons (G)

If a PC falls through the illusion, read:

The ground you expected to find beneath your feet isn't there. You feel yourself sinking, and what looked to be relatively shallow water is already well above your head.

When the guardian demons attack, read:

A trio of horrific beasts—amalgams of deep-sea creature and insect, somewhat but not like that of the horror you fought at the cave entrance—step toward you from behind statues in the cave. They each clutch tridents.

When the illusory Voice surfaces to attack, read:

A nightmare of horrendous proportions rises from the rippling surface, a reflection of the ancient, primal evil of Dagon! Tendrils lash outward in all directions as though seeking prey of their own volition. Behind them, inhuman eyes gleam red in the gloom, and enormous gills pulse in time to the beating of some inhuman heart. From the beast, a twisting aura flows, causing all around it to ripple and warp in your sight.

Passive Perception Check

DC 16: *Are you seeing things? Barely visible in the deep, dark water, you spot another terrible shape, like that which lurks near the surface.*

DC 18: *Portions of the room, and indeed even the priestess, don't seem right. They shift and shimmer ever so slightly, as if they are images projected on the canvas of reality.*

Tactics

The PCs are in for one hell of a fight—one based on deception as much as power. Throughout the battle, the guardian demons make use of the statues' teleportation effects if doing so is tactically sound.

Round One: The illusory Voice makes vague gestures toward the PCs, as though calling upon its powers. The true Voice glides closer to the surface so that it can attack with *frigid burst*, making it appear as though the illusion launched the attack. A guardian demon uses its poison breath on a group of PCs, while the others attempt to restrain PCs with their skewering tines.

Round Two: The illusory Voice goes through the precise same motions; allow the PCs a DC 19 Perception check to see that it's repeating its actions, as though looped. A PC who notices this immediately gains a Perception check to see through the illusion. The guardian demons continue to trade off, one using *poison breath* while the others use their tines.

Encounter Level

The Voice's preparations for combat, and the synergy with its abilities and the watery environment, add an additional 400 XP to the encounter total.

Round Three+: Once its illusion has been identified, or after 3 rounds, the Voice surfaces to make use of its more direct abilities. It starts with a *venom spray*, and then attempts to *dominate* a PC, either using the target to attack its foes or having the target walk out into the water to drown. The guardian demons continue to gang up on PCs, focusing their efforts particularly on those who can harm the Voice.

Conclusion

The guardian demons fight to the death. When reduced to 23 hit points, the Voice fakes a retreat, diving deep into the water, only to resume the attack 1d3 rounds later. When reduced to 10 hit points, it genuinely tries to flee, retreating to the deep ocean and abandoning Ashenport to its fate.

3 Guardian Demons (G)	Level 11 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 1,000
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
HP 113; **Bloodied** 56	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23	
Resist 10 poison, 10 variable (2/encounter; see *Monster Manual* glossary)	
Speed 6	
(+) **Trident (standard;** at will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Skewering Tines** (standard; sustain standard; at will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is restrained (until escape). The guardian demon can sustain the power as a standard action, in which case the target takes 1d8 + 5 damage and is still restrained. While the target is restrained, the guardian demon can't make trident attacks.	
✧ **Poison Breath** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Poison**	
Close blast 3; the guardian demon breathes a cloud of poison gas that fills the area; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 poison damage and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Abyssal
Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +13	
Str 20 (+10)	**Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 17 (+8)	**Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)

Voice of Dagon (V) Level 12 Elite Artillery
Large elemental magical beast (demon) XP 1,400
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision
Riptide aura 5; enemies treat the area as difficult terrain.
HP 192; **Bloodied** 96
AC 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5, swim 10
Action Points 1

Tentacle (standard; at will)
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is chaos-touched (save ends; see *chaos warp* below).

Tentacle Lash (standard; at will)
Make two *tentacle* attacks.

Venomous Spit (standard; at will) ✦ **Poison**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target is chaos-touched (save ends; see *chaos warp* below).

Venomous Stream (standard; at will) ✦ **Poison**
Make two *venomous spit* attacks.

Dominate (standard; at will) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 10; the target must be humanoid and must be chaos-touched; +17 vs. Will; target is dominated (save ends). The Voice of Dagon can dominate only one creature at a time.

Chaos Warp (immediate interrupt; at will)
The Voice can cause a chaos-touched creature to immediately reroll one attack roll, check, or save. The target must take the lower roll. No attack roll is required, but only chaos-touched creatures can be affected. (The Voice can use this power only once per round in total, not once per round per chaos-touched creature.)

Frigid Burst (standard; encounter) ✦ **Cold**
Area burst 4 within 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 cold damage, and the target is chaos-touched and immobilized (save ends both; see *chaos warp* above).

Venom Spray (standard; encounter) ✦ **Poison**
Close burst 5 (affects enemies only); +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target is chaos-touched (save ends both; see *chaos warp* above).

Dagon's Proxy
Against a chaos-touched target, the Voice of Dagon gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals +2d6 damage with a successful tentacle attack.

Lord of Illusions
The Voice of Dagon can cast illusion rituals without paying the component cost.

Threatening Reach
The Voice of Dagon can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 20
Skills Arcana +16
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 23 (+12)
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 21 (+11) **Cha** 18 (+10)

Features of the Area

Altar: The stone altar has AC and Reflex defenses of 3, a Fortitude defense of 15, and 200 hit points. It is attached to the floor, and far too heavy to move. The serpentine head rearing off the image, however, is treated as a smaller object, with defenses of 8 and 20 hit points. It requires an extra square of movement to step up onto the altar. It provides cover to anyone behind it. Due to the altar's dark energy, all adjacent characters take a –1 penalty to attack rolls with divine powers (unless they are worshipers of Dagon).

Ledge: The ledge is roughly 2 squares high and requires a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Statues, Large: The statues have AC and Reflex defenses of 4, a Fortitude defense of 12, and 80 hit points. Climbing a statue requires a DC 15 Athletics check. They can be pushed over with a DC 23 Strength check. A falling statue makes a +12 vs. Reflex attack against characters in 2 adjacent squares (in a line chosen by the one pushing the statue). A hit deals 2d6 + 4 damage and knocks the target prone. The squares become difficult terrain. The statues in this chamber are mystically linked. Anyone standing adjacent to one can use a move action to teleport adjacent to any of the others. A character who spends 1 full round adjacent to a statue, or who sees someone else make use of the teleportation effect, automatically knows how to do so. A statue that has been pushed over loses this ability.

Statues, Medium: The statues have AC and Reflex defenses of 5, a Fortitude defense of 10, and 40 hit points. They can be pushed over with a DC 19 Strength check. A falling statue makes a +11 vs. Reflex attack against a character in a single adjacent square (chosen by the one pushing it over). A hit deals 2d6 + 2 damage and knocks the target prone. The square becomes difficult terrain. The statues in this chamber are mystically linked. Anyone standing adjacent to one can use a move action to teleport adjacent to any of the others. A character who spends 1 full round adjacent to a statue, or who sees someone else make use of the teleportation effect, automatically knows how to do so. A statue that has been pushed over loses this ability.

Water, Deep: Characters moving into this water must swim. Due to the choppiness of the water and the movement of the tides and the creatures within, this requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Out in the Wild

Encounter Level 11 (3,000 XP)

Setup

This encounter occurs only if the PCs attempt to flee Ashenport. Place the PCs as appropriate along the path, then read the text below.

1 horrid timber (M)

When the horrid timber attacks, read:

The branches and leaves of the surrounding foliage whip about violently in the heavy winds and crushing rains. Only at the last second does it become apparent that some of the plants are thrusting forward, against the wind! From out of the trees comes a terrible mass of writhing vines and vicious thorns that gnash together like grinding teeth. An ichor that glistens even through the rain drips from the vines.

Passive Perception Check

Remember to apply a -2 penalty to the party's passive Perception score, due to the rain.

DC 27: *Something large is moving through the wood beside the road. It blends almost invisibly into the foliage, but you can tell its there by the movement of the branches.*

Tactics

Round One+: The horrid timber attacks with a *spore pod* in the first round, unless the PCs have already scattered too far to do so. Beyond that, it lashes about with its branches. Unless it's surrounded by multiple melee combatants, it launches at least two attacks at each individual, in hopes of knocking them prone. Unless doing so draws an opportunity attack, it uses its *spore pod* in each round where that attack is available.

Encounter Level

The horrid timber's ability to ignore the winds grants it a major advantage in this battle, adding 500 XP to the value of the encounter.

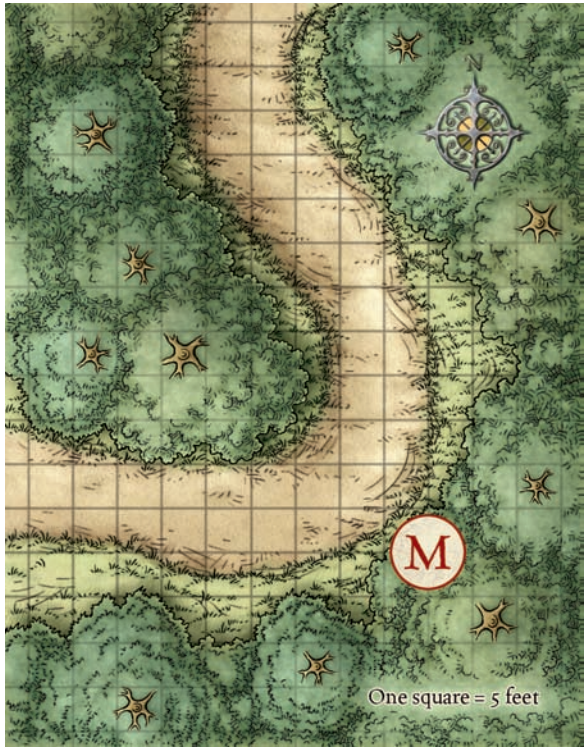
Features of the Area

The area has the following features.

Mud: Due to the rains, the road is difficult terrain.

Storm: All adjacent creatures have concealment (-2 to attack rolls), while those farther away have total concealment (-5 to attack rolls). Perception checks take a -5 penalty. The rain automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames.

Horrid Timber (M) **Level 10 Solo Soldier**
Large elemental animate (demon, plant) XP 2,500
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
Tangle Roots aura 4; all nonplant creatures treat the area as difficult terrain
HP 444 **Bloodied** 222
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 25
Resist 10 poison
Saving Throws +4
Speed 4
Action Points 2
⊕ **Flailing Branch** (standard; at will)
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage.
⸸ **Whipping Branches** (standard; at will)
Make up to four *flailing branch* attacks, but it cannot attack the same target more than twice. If two or more hit the same target, that target is knocked prone.
✲ **Spore Pod** (standard; ⚄ ⚅)
Area burst 1 within 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; target begins to sprout thorns that grow through its skin; this deals ongoing 5 damage and causes the target to become slowed (a single save ends both).
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal
Skills In areas of overgrowth and forest terrain, the horrid timber gains +10 to Stealth checks
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 19 (+9)
Con 23 (+11) **Int** 7 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+7)



Tree: A tree is an obstacle that occupies a square. It requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Wind: Movement in any direction other than southwest is automatically slowed. The horrid timber is large enough to ignore this effect.

Conclusion

The horrid timber is an alien predator, with no real sense of self-preservation. It fights to the death.

About the Author

Ari Marmell has been writing RPGs and fiction for many years now, and has over a dozen credits for Wizards of the Coast. He's recently been reading far more H.P. Lovecraft than is probably good for him. Any similarities between Ashenport and a small New England city known as Innsmouth are not even remotely coincidental. *Iä! Iä!*

Thunderspire Labyrinth

Forgotten Realms Conversion

by Greg Bilsland

illustrations by Chris Seaman

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THIS ARTICLE PROVIDES DETAILS for setting *H2: Thunderspire Labyrinth* in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting. *Thunderspire Labyrinth* follows *Keep on the Shadowfell* in the H-series of adventures, and much like the article adapting *H1* to the Forgotten Realms, this article provides enhanced interactions with NPCs, a new monster, and geographical details relevant to the Realms. This article assumes you have already read through *Thunderspire Labyrinth*.

The Setting

In the Forgotten Realms campaign setting, Thunderspire Mountain is located about an hour's journey off the East Way, the road that extends through the Thunder Peaks from Arabel in Cormyr to Highmoon in the Dalelands. The mountain is a three-day journey west from Winterhaven, the town featured in *Keep on the Shadowfell*.

The Threat

For decades, Cormyr has devoted its military resources to protecting its borders and quashing the influence of Sembia and Netheril. However, keeping those threats at bay has left other parts of the country susceptible. Pockets of lawlessness have swelled along the eastern borderlands. One such pocket is Thunderspire Mountain, where a group of wizards called the Mages of Saruun have set up a black market city in a chamber known as the Seven-Pillared Hall.

The Seven-Pillared Hall is one of many chambers that is part of Saruun Khel, an ancient minotaur city. Although sometimes referred to as "the Labyrinth," Saruun Khel is in fact a satellite city of a vast Underdark region far to the northwest. Much like their brethren from the original Labyrinth, those in Saruun Khel fell to infighting and devastating wars with their neighbors, eventually leaving the city deserted. Since then, centuries have passed, and new, dangerous occupants have filled the space.

No one—not even the Mages of Saruun—yet realizes the threat Paldemar represents should he gain dominion over Thunderspire.

Recent Developments

The activities of the Bloodreavers, the Grimmerzhul duergar, and the Blackfang gnolls are identical to those in the adventure. However, Paldemar Spellkeeper represents a different threat in the Forgotten Realms setting.

Paldemar is originally from Amn and is a devoted follower of Cyric. He trafficked illicit arcane items to and from Westgate through Proskur, but after Cormyr exposed his operation and shut it down, he sought revenge. He joined the Mages of Saruun in the hope that he might drive the organization to become a thorn in Cormyr's side. However, the Mages of Saruun were loath to draw Cormyr's ire, fearing the country would shut down their profitable operation. Infuriated by their refusal, Paldemar instead plotted to destroy his fellow wizards. No one—not even the Mages of Saruun—yet realizes the threat Paldemar represents, for should he gain dominion over Thunderspire, he could cripple Cormyr's economy by seizing the lucrative trade route between Cormyr and the Dalelands.

Name Changes

Thunderspire Labyrinth includes names of places and deities that are not part of the Forgotten Realms setting. The names are listed below alongside the Realms-adapted names.

Original Name	Forgotten Realms Name
Vecna	Cyric
Erathis	Torm
Torog	Ghaunadaur
Avandra	Chauntea
Trade Road	East Way
Harkenwold	Hullack Forest

Nonplayer Characters

The Seven-Pillared Hall contains nonplayer characters (NPCs) from both near and afar. Although most of the trade in the Seven-Pillared Hall is illicit, both good and evil characters reside there. This section describes how to adapt those characters by adding a dimension of the Forgotten Realms to their personality and background.

Gendar

Gendar is a self-exiled drow from Sschindylryn, an Underdark drow city that lies beneath Cormyr. After competing with the city's countless Underdark merchants for decades, Gendar decided to take his interests abroad. It was during his journeys that he stumbled upon the Seven-Pillared Hall. He bribed the Mages of Saruun to let him set up shop, and he has been making a profit ever since.

Gendar is sarcastic, takes humor at others' expense, and speaks condescendingly to anyone he perceives as inferior, which is almost everyone. However, for PCs willing to tolerate him, he offers a boon of information and opportunities. Aside from his mission to recover the skull scepter (page 14 of *Adventure Book One* of *Thunderspire Labyrinth)* and the multifaceted crystal (see "Echoes of Thunderspire Labyrinth," elsewhere in this issue of *Dungeon*), he also has a few requests. He offers money and information in exchange.

Gendar's Quests

✦ A nest of kruthiks resides in the Labyrinth, and their carapaces are a valuable material for certain armors. Slay the kruthiks and bring their carapaces to Gendar. Reward: 250 gp and 1 piece of information.

✦ An insane dwarf named Thain Cardanas wanders the Labyrinth. After murdering a kinsman, he fled here to start a new clan. He carries with him a silver crown that he stole from his clan, and the dwarves want it back. Recover the crown and bring it to Gendar. Reward: 500 gp and 1 piece of information.

✦ The Palace of Zaamdul contains a statuette of Baphomet that was once owned by the high priest of Saruun Khel. Recover the statuette and bring it back to Gendar. Reward: 750 gp and 1 piece of information.

✦ The Hall of the Broken Dragon contains a large statue of a blue dragon, which was originally a devotion built for Aurgloroasa by the resident minotaurs. Aurgloroasa sometimes used magic to transform herself, visiting the halls of Saruun Khel to walk among the minotaurs and admite the devotional statue. The hall has been looted of most valuables, but a few items remain. The statue has two large obsidian eyes still set in the statue. Recover the obsidian eyes and bring them back to Gendar. Reward: 1,000 gp and 1 piece of information.

Gendar's Information

✦ One of the Mages of Saruun recently disappeared. His name is Paldemar Spellkeeper, and he has a burning hatred of Cormyr. This hatred comes from Cormyr's interference in his illicit trafficking of arcane items in Proskur. Rumors say that he was a follower of the god of strife and lies, Cyric.

✦ The Grimmerzhul Trading Post is a cover for the clandestine activities in the Horned Hold. The duergar use the outpost to gather supplies to feed the slaves that help them make weapons.

✦ Several travelers from Sembia have recently come through the Seven-Pillared Hall. They've been tight-lipped about their business. They seem to have some involvement with Noristo, the tiefling lord of House Azer.

✦ Belendithas of the Dusk, a shade assassin, sometimes comes through the Seven-Pillared Hall. When he's here, everyone walks softly, fearing the killer. It's said his price for an assassination is only 100 gp but that he requires a newborn human child as additional payment.

✦ Noristo, the tiefling lord of House Azer, is an exile from Arabel. His refusal to uphold the tenants in the Suzail Writ—a document that limited the power of nobility and declared that all people would receive a jury by peers—resulted in the fall of his house. Some suspect that he is biding his time here until he finds an opportunity to extend his power and seize back what he lost.

Kedhira

In the adventure's original text, Kedhira was a duergar theurge, proficient with various arcane attacks. Her role in the adventure doesn't change; however, in this adaptation, she has training as a

Kedhira, Duergar Swordmage (T) Level 5 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf (devil) XP 200

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32
AC 21; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16
Immune illusion; **Resist** 10 fire, 10 poison
Speed 5

⊕ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.

↓ **Blastback Swipe** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Thunder**
+10 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 5 thunder damage, and push the target 2 squares. Kedhira can use this power in place of a melee basic attack when charging. When Kedhira uses her *aegis of assault* immediate reaction, she can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.

↛ **Lightning Lure** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Ranged 3; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is pulled to the nearest unoccupied square adjacent to Kedhira.

✧ **Aegis of Assault** (minor; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Close burst 2; Target one creature in burst. Kedhira marks target, and the target remains marked until Kedhira uses this power to mark another creature or another mark supersedes it. When within 10 squares of Kedhira, if a creature marked with this power hits with an attack that does not include Kedhira, she can use an immediate reaction to teleport to a square adjacent to the target and make a melee basic attack against it. If no unoccupied space exists adjacent to the target, she can't use this immediate reaction. See also *blastback swipe*.

✧ **Sword Burst** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**
Close burst 1; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 force damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven
Skills Arcana +12, Dungeoneering +11

Str 16 (+5)	**Dex** 13 (+2)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	**Int** 20 (+7)	**Cha** 11 (+2)

Equipment bastard sword

swordmage. Although few duergar have the patience and discipline to train as a swordmage, Kedhira is different. She spent much time traveling the Underdark, including areas to the east under Myth Drannor. There, she met an eladrin named Salathryn, who was cast out from the Coronal Guard. From him, she was able to learn the art of the swordmage.

Terrlen Darkseeker

Terrlen is a former member of the Purple Dragon Knights, a group of Cormyr's elite warriors. After two decades of loyal service, Terrlen became disenchanted with the politics of the knighthood. He is a skilled warrior and good-natured individual, so he sought an outlet to fight evil on his terms. That brought him to Thunderspire. As in the adventure, Terrlen is affected by a lycanthropic curse.

Tips for Roleplaying Terrlen:

✦ Terrlen is gruff, but he gladly makes conversation.
✦ Terrlen has ill feelings toward Cormyr, especially the Purple Dragon Knights. He makes his opinions known to anyone who will listen.
✦ Terrlen reluctantly talks of his past in the knighthood. He does emphasize the threat that Netheril represents. He also derides Sembia and their relationship with Netheril.

Bennik the Wanderer

Bennik is a recent arrival from the West. Originally a resident of Waterdeep, he carries stories and rumors. Any of his stories could prove the basis for the party's next adventure. He also carries a bountiful supply of maps, which he is willing to sell should the PCs prove interested.

Potential Adventure Hooks:

✦ **Orcs in the Stonelands:** The word from Arabel is that there is trouble in the Stonelands. A tribe of orcs is running amok in Cormyr's northern region. The orcs are much farther south than normal, as if something is driving them out of their traditional homelands. Some lords in Arabel are becoming concerned and are willing to pay a group of adventuring entrepreneurs to quell the threat and discover the source of the incursion.
✦ **Scourge of the South:** A fugitive from the prison city of Wheloon has taken measures to unite the bandits and criminals of southern Cormyr. The half-elf fugitive is known as the Scourge of the South, and his band of miscreants resides in the Vast Swamp. If they were to gain the support of Sembia, the group of bandits could rival a small army.
✦ **The Blood Stag:** In the King's Forest to the west, a stag the color of blood has been roaming the woods, killing hunters and travelers alike. The menace is elusive, and none of Cormyr's rangers has yet to capture the beast. King Azoun VI has issued a challenge to the hunters of the realm to track down and slay the malevolent beast, with a 2,500 gp reward for the creature's head. Many folks speculate that the creature is part of some terrible curse.
✦ **Kidnapped:** This hook assumes that at least one PC is from a city near the Thunder Peaks. As the PCs are traveling, they come upon the hometown of one of their party's members. This place could be a large city like Arabel or Highmoon, or it could be a smaller town like Tethgard or Elfhold (if the character is an elf). Alternatively, you could make up a provincial,

roadside village, such as those provided by the adventure's original text.

When the party arrives in the town, the character discovers that in his or her absence, a family member has been taken by a marauding band of slavers known as the Bloodreavers. This hobgoblin band left only a few days ago, and though the town has requested soldiers to hunt down the offenders, so far nothing has been done. The character's friends and family are worried that if something isn't done soon, it will be too late. The Bloodreavers are known to reside in the Thunder Peaks, around the disreputable "city" in Thunderspire Mountain. Members of the town can direct the characters on how to find the Seven-Pillared Hall.

Much like the "Investigate the Bloodreavers" hook from the adventure, this hook sends the characters to help the captured slaves. This hook adds a personal note, and for added incentive, the family member that has been taken should be one of the two prisoners recovered in encounter W10.

Alternate Skill Challenge (A2-2)

This encounter is an alternative to the skill challenge that occurs before the PCs enter the Tower of Mysteries. Because Paldemar and his followers worship Cyric and not Vecna, this skill challenge is designed to befuddle and confound characters, shaking their sanity.

Setup

This skill challenge involves the adventurers and a spectral manifestation of Cyric.

After opening the secret door with the silver key and following the hidden passage, the adventurers reach a nondescript chamber that contains a 10-foot-wide circle inscribed on the floor. The circle glows with a faint pulse of arcane light.

A DC 15 Arcana check allows a character to determine that this is a teleportation circle.

When a character moves adjacent to the circle, read:

The circle flares with blinding light for a moment. When the light fades away, a spectral figure is standing within the circle. The figure is clad in thick robes of deep purple. The figure cackles madly and then says in a high, keening voice, "Come, come, what do you think of me? What do you think of yourself? You know nothing—nothing of anything! The secrets of the tower come at the price of your sanity. Your minds are fragile in my hands. You must pay for the right to enter this place."

Cyric is an uncaring deity who gladly betrays his followers if it means sewing more chaos. He believes that if his adepts are worthy of his blessing, then they should be able to overcome the adventurers.

The spirit is arrogant and haughty. It cannot take damage and laughs at any efforts to kill it. After giving a speech, the spirit conjures an illusory version of each PC. These images are identical to the PCs except for the twisted, maddened faces they wear.

The Challenge

The adventurers must overcome their spectral doubles and keep their sanity intact. First they have to endure a test of knowledge, in which their reflections pose a riddle. Each character must participate in this challenge. If, after each PC has completed a skill check, the skill challenge is still unresolved, the characters move on to a test of insight. Allow a player with a character trained in the skills below to select the skill he or she wants challenged.

Complexity: 2 (Six successes before three failures. The PCs also fail if they finish the entire skill challenge without accruing six total successes.)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, Insight, Religion, Streetwise

The challenge: The adventurers must overcome their spectral doubles and keep their sanity intact.

Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, Religion, or Streetwise: In turn, each reflection mocks its corresponding PC and challenges him or her to the following puzzle: "Tell me something that I don't know." Lucky for the PCs, each reflection is a twisted and imperfect version of them, and there are plenty of things the PCs might know that their reflections do not. A DC 17 Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, Religion, or Streetwise check imparts some bit of knowledge the reflection did not know until the PCs uttered it.

Each PC is quizzed in this manner once, so each PC can gain only one success through this round of the skill challenge.

Insight: After a reflection quizzes each PC on lore, the PCs' reflections tell each PC, in turn, some lie. Maybe it claims that his or her family members and friends have been slain, or if character does not know his or her family, the form makes up other lies. It might claim that the character's death is imminent, describing his or her demise in all manner of horrible details.

If the PCs succeeded in the knowledge round of the skill challenge, the Insight DC is 12 to gain another challenge success and not be adversely affected by the lie. A PCs who failed the first part of this skill challenge must succeed a DC 17 check to gain a skill challenge success and not be adversely affected by the lies. A PC who fails this part of the skill challenge takes 5 points of psychic damage.

Other Skills: Athletics, Acrobatics, Diplomacy. Each of these checks can be attempted instead of the primary methods of the challenge.

Athletics or Acrobatics: A character trained in Athletics or Acrobatics can make a DC 17 Athletics or Acrobatics check to escape the sinister reflection. A mirror image that is evaded in this way disappears. A character gains two successes in this way, but can no longer participate in the skill challenge. On a failed check, the PC takes 10 psychic damage.

Bluff: A character trained in Bluff can make a DC 17 Bluff check to outsmart the reflection, angering it so much that it disappears in a howl of rage. A reflection that is defeated in this way earns the party two successes, but that PC can no longer participate in the skill challenge. On a failed check, the PC takes 10 psychic damage.

Conclusion

The negotiation continues until the PCs earn six successes or three failures. The PCs receive information based on the total number of successes achieved by the end of the challenge. Then the image of Cyric moves aside and allows the characters to use the teleportation circle.

Reward: When the PCs complete the challenge, they gain access to the teleportation circle. If they earned six successes, they don't suffer the maddening effects of Cyric's manifestation.

Failure: If the PCs have three failures, the sanity of each PC suffers from the trial. Each character takes 10 psychic damage.

Regardless of the number of successes, the characters can activate the teleportation circle as a standard action. Everyone standing on it immediately teleports to the circle on the first level of the Tower of Mysteries.

When the PCs have completed the challenge and paid the cost, read:

"You may now enter this Tower of Mysteries, but you shall never leave. Your minds will crumble and your vows will break. I, Cyric, shall feast upon your sanity until nothing remains!" After speaking, the spectral figure fades away.

About the Author

Greg Bilsland is a game editor and contract writer at Wizards of the Coast. His writing credits include the *Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide* and several *D&D Insider™* articles. When he's not working, he spends much of his free time writing speculative fiction in one of Seattle's many coffee shops.

HEROIC
1-10

Echoes of Thunderspire Labyrinth

by Greg Bilsland

illustrations by Chris Stevens and Saejin Oh
cartography by Robert Lee

The *Thunderspire Labyrinth* adventure has many locations essential to the completion of the adventure. However, it also offers a few nonessential adventure sites. This Side Trek expands upon those locations. You can either provide characters with a hook from the section below or allow them to stumble into the encounters during their exploration of the Labyrinth.

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Tower of Sunset

Wynn Longsaddle (*Adventure Book One*, page 17) is a messenger for the Mages of Saruun and carries messages through the Khel Vale. Recently, gargoyles have been harassing her travels along the road. A character that makes a Streetwise check (DC 15) can learn that she is seeking help in dealing with this threat. Regardless of whether or not the characters know of her need, she says the following when the characters speak to her.

"In the past few weeks, my travels on the Vale Road have been plagued by stone flying creatures. They descend from atop Thunderspire and try to steal the messages and supplies I carry. I spoke to the vale's other inhabitants, and they report similar problems. I suspect these creatures are acting at the behest of the shadar-kai witch, Denoa, who occupies the Sunset Tower. The Mages of Saruun refuse to act, so please, can you help put a stop to these attacks?"

Wynn can only offer 100 gp as reimbursement for the PCs' help, but if the characters travel to the tower and eliminate the threat, the party also receives 1,000 quest XP. Wynn can provide directions to the tower.

Cisterns

The damp chambers that lie beneath the Labyrinth are known as the cisterns, and they contain dangerous Underdark creatures. Vadriar the Sage (*Adventure Book One* page 17), while exploring the cisterns, discovered a troglodyte cult of Torog seeking to develop a ritual to collapse the upper levl of the Labyrinth. A curse that the troglodyte shaman bestowed on him prevents him from speaking of the cult's plans, but he does say the following to the characters when they speak to him.

"A great evil lies in the cisterns, and if it is not stopped, it could mean our doom! The source of evil is—" Before Vadriar can identify the source, he seems to swallow his words. "In my eagerness for help, I forgot about the curse," he says. "I cannot speak of what this peril is, but I can show you. If you accompany me to the cisterns, perhaps we can avert this calamity."

Vadriar cannot pay the PCs for their services, but he appeals to their goodwill. If the PCs agree to help, then he takes them to the cisterns and shows them the location of the cult. He avoids battle, and once the PCs defeat the troglodyte shaman, he explains the full details of the cult's machinations. The party receives 1,250 quest XP for helping to quash the cult's plans.

House of Silence

If the characters hire Terrlen Darkseeker (*Adventure Book One*, page 17) to help guide them through the Labyrinth, then they witness his lycanthropic transformation. When he transforms, read the following:

The body of the man before you begins to shudder, and hair sprouts from his skin as he transforms into a beast. Terrlen cries out, "What—what's happening to me? Oh gods, what's going on?" A moment later, his words become snarls as he turns on you and attacks.

When the party defeats Terrlen, his body reverts to human, and he is left alive at 1 hit point (provided the characters don't just finish him off). When the characters inquire about his condition, he says.

Transformed into a beast you say? I don't remember anything, but from my condition, it must be true. Lately when I venture into the Labyrinth, large pieces of my memory go missing. It all started when I explored the crypts in the House of Silence. Now that I think on it, something happened there. I discovered a bronze disk, and when I looked upon it, I was overcome with rage. Perhaps that is the cause of my affliction. I beg you, please help me break this curse.

Terrlen can provide directions to the House of Silence, and if the characters go to the House of Silence and destroy the bronze disk, it breaks the curse on Terrlen. The party receives 1,000 quest XP.

Court of Bones

If the characters recover the skull scepter as part of the Treasure Seeker adventure hook (*Adventure Book One*, page 14), Gendar offers another challenging quest. When characters bring the scepter, he says:

"So, you recovered the scepter. You must be reasonably competent. I have another job for you. There is an object located in a place called the Court of Bones. The object is a multifaceted crystal, and while not magical, I wish to acquire it for my collection. Are you interested?"

Gendar offers to pay them 250 gp for the item's recovery. With a DC 15 Diplomacy check, he can be persuaded to offer 500 gp instead. Once the characters agree, he provides directions to the Court of Bones (*Adventure Book One*, page 17). He warns that another denizen of the Labyrinth, a wight named Az'Al'Bani, is also searching for the court.

Tower of Sunset

Encounter Level 6 (1,250 XP)

Setup

The path leading to the Tower of Sunset is a long, winding staircase that ascends from the Labyrinth. The tower sits on a crag that juts from Thunderspire's side. The tower overlooks the Khel Vale, and it is from the tower that the Shadar-kai witch, Denoa, sends her gargoyle minions to harass the valley's occupants.

The crumbling steps and sheer cliffs usually deter adventurers and explorers from approaching the tower. As a result, Denoa does not keep a careful watch on the approach to the tower. PCs can safely reach the tower's door without initiating an encounter.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

Denoa, shadar-kai witch (W)
2 iron defenders (D)
2 gargoyles (G)
1 shadow hound (H)

When the characters open the door, read:

The scent of dried herbs wafts out from the tower's interior. A table stands in the middle of the room and is surrounded by a few modest furnishings. Three canine creatures stand near the table, growling. From behind the table, a dusky-skinned woman looks up and says, "Come in, come in."

If the characters agree to enter, then allow the PCs to move into the southern part of the room but nowhere beyond the table and iron defenders.

Once all the characters are in the room, read:

A smile spreads across the woman's dark face as she stretches out a gnarly hand and gives her finger a flick. The door slams shut, and at once, the canine creatures lunge forward.

Tactics

Denoa remains in the back and blasts the characters with ranged attacks while the iron defenders keep the PCs in place. The shadow hound teleports next to a PC, attacks, and then teleports away if necessary. When the iron defenders are defeated, Denoa and the shadow hound (if it remains), retreat to the top level of the tower, where the gargoyles come alive and attack enemies as they pursue Denoa. If the situation becomes desperate, Denoa attempts to leap through the hole in the northwest corner (a 10-foot fall) and escapes out the door and into the Labyrinth.

If a character attempts to shimmy along the side of the tower, the gargoyles are entitled to a Perception check to detect the intruder, which they then attack.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light inside tower; darkness or bright light outside depending on time of day.

Cliffs: A Medium or smaller character can traverse the ledge surrounding the tower. That character is considered to be squeezing. A character knocked prone in one of these squares falls. A character that falls in this way can attempt to catch himself or herself (*PH* 284). The cliff descends 100 feet.

Fireplace: The fireplace is difficult terrain. A character entering a fireplace square takes 1d8 fire damage.

Furnishings: The squares containing the chair, table, fireplace and bed are difficult terrain.

Stairs: These squares are difficult terrain for a character ascending the stairway.

Roof: These squares are slides and send a character over the ledge unless he or she makes a DC 17 Athletics check or Acrobatic check to remain in that square.

Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain.

Treasure: Denoa has a chest under her bed that contains 389 gp, a black pearl worth 500 gp, and a +2 *orb of indisputable gravity*.

Denoa, Shadar-kai Witch (W)	**Level 7 Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +6	**Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38	
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19	
Speed 6; see also *shadow jaunt*	
(+) **Blackfire Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**	
+11 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 fire and necrotic damage.	
Beshadowed Mind (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Necrotic**	
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).	
Deep Shadow (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Necrotic**	
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround the shadar-kai witch. The witch and any other shadow creatures in the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. The shadar-kai witch can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses *shadow jaunt* or moves more than half her speed on her turn.	
Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**	
The shadar-kai witch teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Primordial
Skills Acrobatics +8, Arcana +12, Religion +12, Stealth +13	
Str 13 (+4)	**Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	**Int** 19 (+7) **Cha** 17 (+6)

2 Iron Defenders (D) Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 150 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 47 each; **Bloodied** 23
AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Immune disease, poison
Speed 6

⨺ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

⨺ **Guard Creature** (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy attacks the creature guarded by the iron defender; at-will)
The iron defender makes a bite attack against the enemy.

Pursue and Attack
When the iron defender makes an opportunity attack, it shifts 1 square before or after the attack.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Shadow Hound (H) Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast XP 250

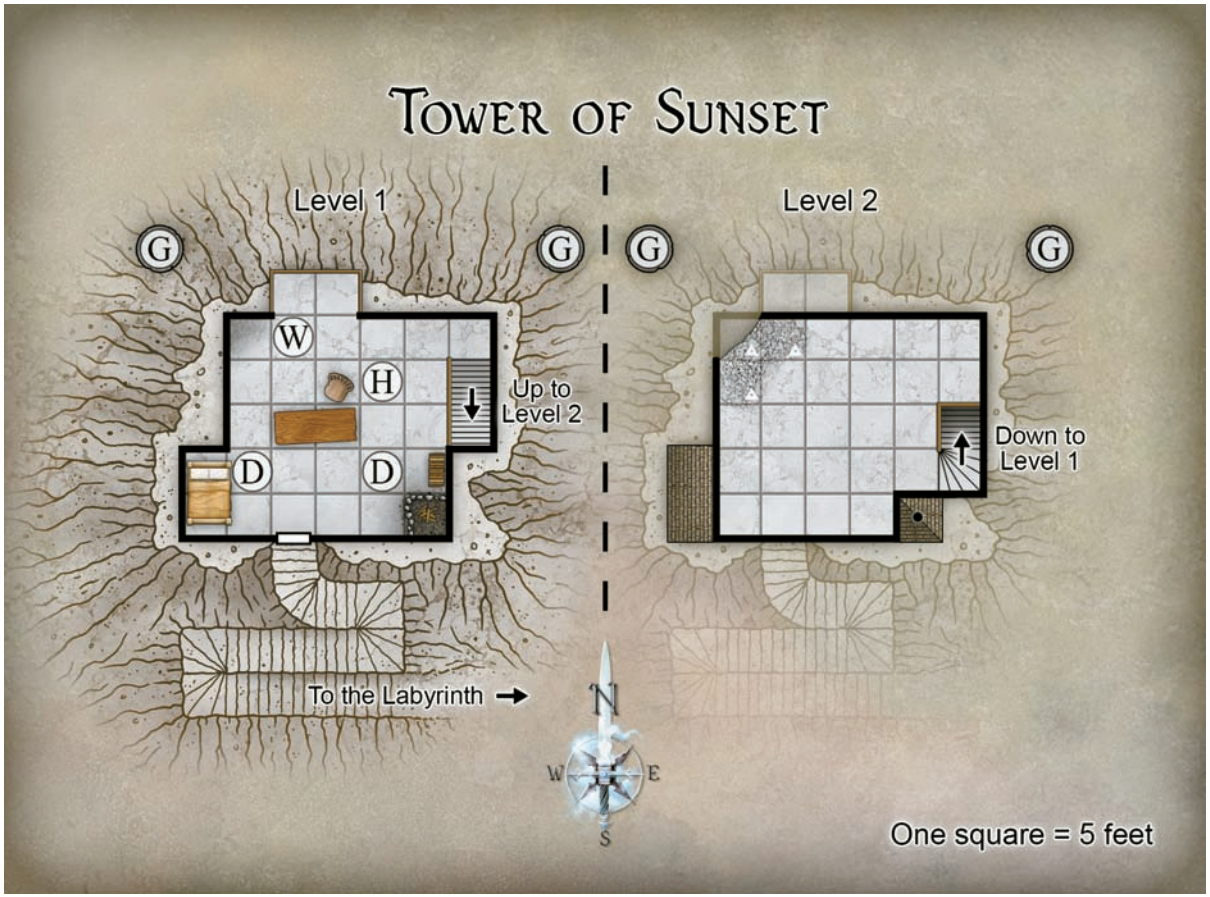
Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.
HP 70; **Bloodied** 35
AC 19; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Vulnerable 5 radiant
Speed 7, teleport 7

⨺ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage; see also *shadow ambush*.

Baying (minor; recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +8 vs. Will; the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.

Shadow Ambush
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 15 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 16 (+6)



Cisterns

Encounter Level 6 (1,150 XP)

Setup

Characters exploring the cisterns or those seeking to help Vadriar might stumble upon this occupied cavern. The cisterns are a honeycomb of natural caves. Many caverns are filled with water or are inaccessible, but some are habitable for those species willing to tolerate the mold.

The troglodyte cult of Torog has set up residence in this chamber, and they attack any intruders who dare to enter their sanctuary.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 troglodyte curse chanter (C)
2 troglodyte maulers (M)
1 grick (G)

When the characters enter the chamber, read:

Water drips from the ceiling of this natural cavern, creating puddles on the rock floor. The smell of damp earth mingles with the stench of excrement permeating the area. Near the front of the cavern, a pair of reptilian humanoids wielding clubs stand guard beside a blue, wormlike creature. From somewhere beyond the creatures, a green glow emanates. With a scream, the creatures attack.

Tactics

The maulers and the grick rush forward and attack the nearest PC. They attempt to block off access to the rest of the chamber, where the curse chanter lurks. The curse chanter stands in the runic circle and hurls ranged attacks at the closest PCs. When the curse chanter's troglodyte allies are bloodied, it uses *dark summons* to teleport them within range so it can use *chant of renewal*.

The maulers then throw javelins from the lower level while they wait for characters to traverse the ledge or come down the slide. Once a PC has reached the bottom, they gang up on him or her while attempting to remain in the runic circle to reap its benefit. The curse chanter stays behind them and continues to use ranged attacks.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light; the runic circle illuminates the lower half of the cavern in green light. Darkness; the upper half of the chamber is not illuminated.

Altar: The squares containing the altar are difficult terrain. The altar has various accoutrements used for sacrifices and profane acts, including sacrificial knives, implements of torture, canopic jars, and bowls. The altar also has a hidden cache that characters can detect with a DC 15 Perception check (see Treasure, below).

Bones: These squares are difficult terrain. The piles contain the bones and visceral remains of creatures, as well as a smattering of rusty equipment and crumbling items. A character might also discover a few items of value among the refuse with a DC 25 Perception check (see Treasure below).

Ledge: A ledge divides the upper half of the cavern (in the southeast) from the lower half of the cavern (in the northwest). There is a difference of 20 feet between the two levels. A creature can attempt a DC 20 Athletics check to climb the wall.

Runic Circle: This circle's position relative to the altar forms the symbol of Torog, the King that Crawls. The shrine and runes are the beginning of a ritual that the troglodytes hope will collapse the upper level of the Labyrinth. Even in its nascent stage, the runic circle provides some minor benefits, including the curse chanter's *dark summons* power.

In addition, the circle gives worshipers of Torog (all three of the troglodytes), a +1 bonus to defenses while standing in a square that the circle occupies.

As a standard action, a character can make a DC 24 Arcana check to recognize that runic circle is part of an unfinished ritual intended to collapse

Troglodyte Curse Chanter Level 8 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 350

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
Troglodyte Stench aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
HP 93; **Bloodied** 46
AC 23; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 22
Speed 5

⨺ **Quarterstaff** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

⨺ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage.

↛ **Poison Ray** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

↛ **Cavern Curse** (standard; recharge ⚀ ⚁ ⚂ ⚃) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 5; +11 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage and is slowed (save ends both).

↜ **Tunnel Grace** (minor 1/round; recharge ⚁ ⚂ ⚃)
Close burst 10; all allies in the burst gain +5 speed until the end of the troglodyte shaman's next turn.

↜ **Chant of Renewal** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Healing**
Close burst 5; bloodied allies in the burst regain 15 hit points.

Dark Summons (minor; while standing on the runic circle; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Teleport an ally within 10 squares into a square adjacent to this creature.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic
Skills Dungeoneering +13, Endurance +14, Religion +9
Str 15 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 18 (+8)
Con 21 (+9) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff

2 Troglodyte Maulers (M) Level 6 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 250 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
Troglodyte Stench aura 1; living enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
HP 74 each; **Bloodied** 37
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Speed 5
(+) **Greatclub** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn.
(+) **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.
Bite (minor 1/round; at-will)
Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and until the end of the troglodyte mauler's next turn, healing on the target restores only half the total amount.
Javelin (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic
Skills Athletics +12, Endurance +12
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+2)
Equipment greatclub, 2 javelins

Thunderspire Labyrinth. A character who makes this check also knows that the troglodytes, as worshipers of Torog, gain a defensive benefit while they stand in the circle.

Slide: A natural slide has formed from the runoff of water in the cavern. This slide, which connects the upper and lower levels, is slick from mud and water. A square containing the slide is difficult terrain and requires a DC 17 Acrobatics check to remain standing. A character who fails this check moves immediately to the puddle of mud at the bottom of the slide, falls prone, and ends his or her move action.

The troglodytes have hidden a small length of rope along the cave wall, which they use to get up and down the slide when necessary. A character who makes a DC 25 Perception check can detect this rope.

Grick (G) Level 7 Brute
Medium aberrant beast XP 300

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48
AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15
Resist 5 against effects that target AC
Speed 6, climb 4
(+) **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will)
+10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Expert Flanker
The grick gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against an enemy it is flanking.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +9
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

A character who uses the rope to repel down still treats the squares as difficult terrain but can forego the Acrobatics checks. The rope is attached to the wall, and any number of characters moving down the slide can use it simultaneously.

Treasure: This encounter has two sources of treasure, the heap of bones and the altar.

A gem-encrusted, gold bowl sits on the top of the altar and is worth 250 gp. Also on top of the altar are several implements of sacrifice and torture, equivalent to 4 daggers. Inside the altar's hidden cache is 90 gp.

The pile of bones contains rotting organic matter and rusted items and equipment. However, one treasure can be found among the garbage. The following shield lies buried at the bottom:

Shield of Speed and Evasion Level 4
A serious strike that slides past this shield might fortify your ability to return the favor.
Item Slot: Arms 840 gp
Shield: Any
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when an attacker scores a critical hit against your AC or Reflex defense. Regain the use of an encounter power, or spend an action point to regain the use of a daily power. The power regained must be of a level equal to or lower than the level of this item.

House of Silence

Encounter Level 6 (1,150 XP)

Setup

Characters might stumble into the House of Silence while exploring the Labyrinth, or they might travel there intentionally to help Terrlen Darkseeker break his lycanthropic curse. Whatever their reason for arriving at the chamber, the PCs face several challenges if they are to attempt to enter.

This encounter includes the following traps and creatures:

1 cresset trap
2 hell hounds (H)
1 mad wraith (W)

When the characters enter the chamber, read:

A 50-foot corridor stretches before you, opening into a larger chamber beyond. The corridor is illuminated by evenly spaced cressets that are set into the wall and filled with burning oil. Two paths branch from the main corridor, each of which is also illuminated.

The encounter can begin in several ways, but combat doesn't start until characters enter the northern chamber. When a character walks within line of sight of the statues in either of the side corridors, it triggers the cresset trap. When characters enter the northern chamber, it triggers the glyphs that summon the hell hounds.

When a character comes within view of a minotaur statue in a side corridor, read:

A 10-foot-tall bronze statue of a minotaur warrior stands before you. Wielding a greataxe, the statue depicts the creature in a valiant pose. The statues' amber eyes glitter suddenly, and at that moment, the cressets on the wall issue a blast of flame.

Tactics

The hell hounds do not start on the map and the wraith is hiding at the beginning of battle (DC 23 Perception check to detect). Once PCs enter the northern chamber, or once the cresset trap is triggered, the hell hounds are summoned into the room. If the PCs have triggered the cresset trap, then the hell hounds wait up to 3 rounds to see if the PCs enter the northern chamber. When the PCs enter, the hell hounds stop delaying and take their turns. The hell hounds take advantage of the fire, fighting from within it to gain concealment.

The wraith avoids the flames and waits until the PCs enter the northern chamber. It then uses phasing to enter the walls and move around the fire into an unoccupied square from which it can use its melee attacks.

If the PCs do not enter the northern chamber after 3 rounds and instead flee back into the Labyrinth, the wraith moves through the walls, avoiding the flames and following them. The hell hounds also pursue, using their resistance to ignore the fire consuming the corridor. In this event, you should feel free to set up an encounter within one of the Labyrinth's corridors or chambers.

Cresset Trap — Level 5 Blaster
Trap — XP 200

These half-hemisphere brass containers hold a supply of oil and burn with a flickering magic flame that can ignite into an inferno.

Trap: When the trap is triggered, the cressets begin to successively burst into flame along the corridors.

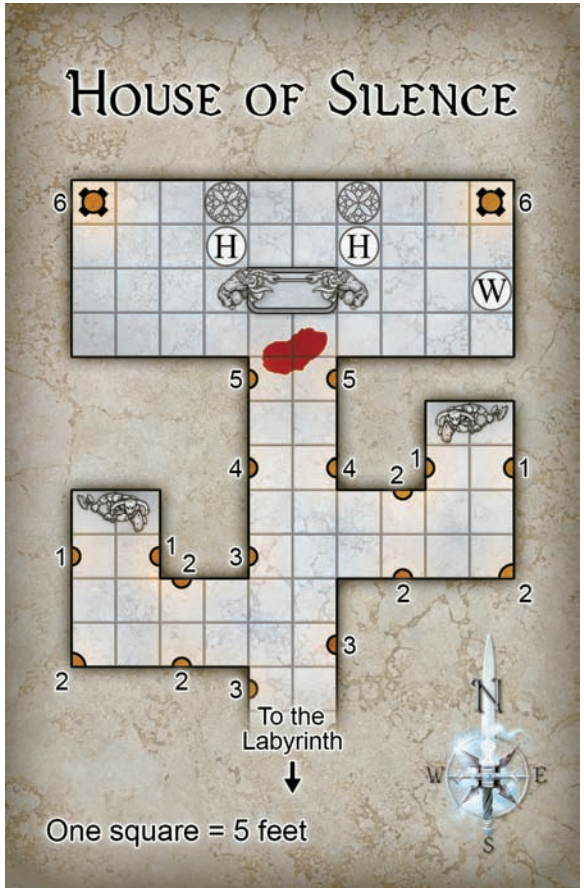
Perception
✦ DC 21: The character notices fire scoring along the wall around the cressets.
✦ DC 25: The character notices the control panel on one of the statues.

Initiative +5

Trigger
When a nonminotaur creature enters into a square within line of sight of a minotaur statue, the cresset trap makes its first attack as an immediate reaction. It then rolls initiative. On their initiative, the cressets go off in succession. When the trap is first triggered, all cressets with number 1 trigger. On their turn, all cressets with number 2 trigger, and so on.

Attack
Immediate Reaction or Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Targets: Each creature in burst
Attack: +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8+4 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, no ongoing damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of fire. The zone provides concealment and lasts for 5 minutes or until the hell hounds are killed. The trap attacks any creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there.

Countermeasures
✦ An adjacent character can disable one cresset with a DC 21 Thievery check.
✦ A character adjacent to a statue can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the trap. DC 25 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 2 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the control panel to explode (close blast 3, 2d8 + 4 damage to all creatures in blast) and the trap remains active.



Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Cressets: These containers are enchanted to continuously burn. Although filled with oil, they do not exhaust the fuel. The flames of a cresset deals 1d6 damage, and they cannot be removed from the wall.

Minotaur Statues: Squares containing statues are difficult terrain. The pair of statues in the northern chamber holds a bronze disk between them inscribed with glyphs. A DC 20 Arcana check reveals that the disk contains a lycanthropic curse that has already been bestowed. The check reveals that destroying the disk breaks the curse (AC 5, Fortitude 10, Reflex 5; hp 50).

Glyphs: These glyphs summon hell hounds. A DC 20 Arcana check reveals that the glyphs' power to summon the creatures recharges each day. A DC 25 Thievery check disables the glyphs' next recharge.

Braziers: Squares containing braziers are difficult terrain. Otherwise, they are identical to the cressets.

Mad Wraith (W) **Level 6 Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
Mad Whispers (**Psychic**) aura 3; deafened creatures are immune; any enemy in the aura at the start of its turn takes 5 psychic damage and is dazed until the start of its next turn. (If the mad wraith takes radiant damage, the aura is negated until the end of the mad wraith's next turn.)
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant (see also *mad whispers* above)
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing
Touch of Madness (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+8 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to Will defense (save ends).
Touch of Chaos (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
+9 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the target moves up to its speed and makes a basic attack against its nearest ally as a free action.
Spawn Wraith
Any humanoid killed by a mad wraith rises as a free-willed mad wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +13

Str 6 (+1)	**Dex** 20 (+8)	**Wis** 6 (+1)
Con 12 (+4)	**Int** 11 (+3)	**Cha** 19 (+7)

2 Hell Hounds (H) **Level 7 Brute**
Medium elemental beast (fire) XP 300 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +11
Fire Shield (**Fire**) aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d6 fire damage.
HP 96 each; **Bloodied** 48
AC 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18
Resist 20 fire
Speed 7
Bite (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 plus 1d8 fire damage.
Fiery Breath (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**
Close blast 3; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 fire damage.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 14 (+5)	**Dex** 14 (+5)	**Wis** 17 (+6)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 2 (-1)	**Cha** 10 (+3)

Treasure: Each of the minotaur statues has eyes inset with amber. Each piece of amber is worth 100 gp, for a total of eight pieces and 800 gp.

Court of Bones

Encounter Level 6 (1,150 XP)

Setup

Characters who venture to the Court of Bones, whether on behalf of Gendar or out of mundane curiosity, must first encounter Az'Al'Bani, a deathlock wight who wanders the Labyrinth in search of the court. Az'Al'Bani holds the key to opening the doors into the Court of Bones, though characters can also enter with a sufficiently high Thievery check (DC 19).

This encounter includes the following creatures:

1 specter (S)
2 minotaur skeletons (M)
2 blazing skeletons (B)

When the characters enter the chamber, read:

A set of double doors opens to reveal an expansive stone chamber. Embossed on the floor of the chamber is an enormous cow's skull. Four pillars, lined in bones, rise to the ceiling. Near the back of the chamber, a set of steps leads up to a pair of thrones that appear to contain the ceremonially wrapped remains of a pair of minotaurs.

When the characters walk onto the embossed cow skull or onto the steps, read:

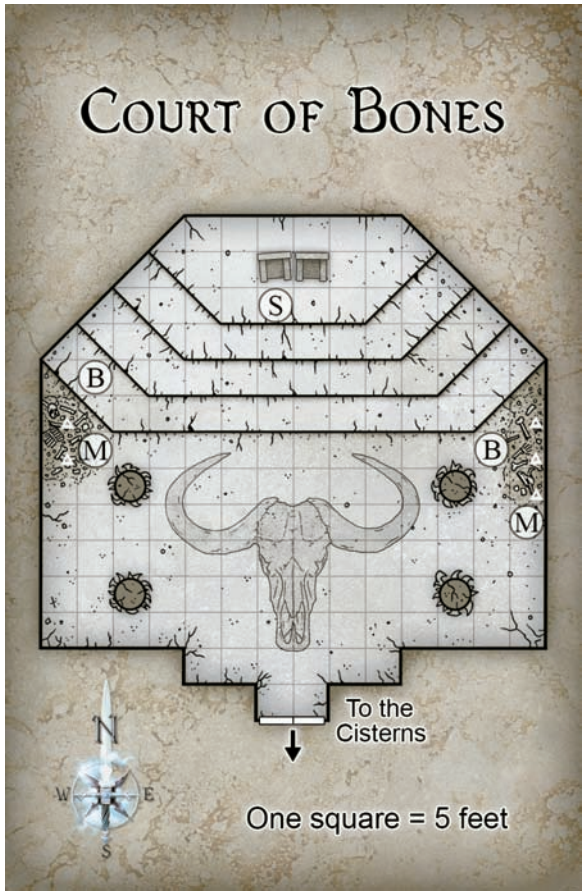
A faint wind disturbs the room, and the sound of clattering bones fills the chamber. From piles of bone along the sides of the wall, skeletal forms begin to rise.

Tactics

As soon as the skeletons rise up, they begin to attack. The minotaur skeletons immediately charge the nearest char-acters, engaging them in melee. The minotaurs try to fight over the embossed cow skull, which provides a regenerative benefit (see Features of the Area). They are otherwise mindless, relentlessly pursuing their enemies and attack-ing until slain.

The blazing skeletons remain as far away from the party as possible, launching fire at characters using *flame orb*. If engaged in melee, the skeletons shift away and launch fire at the attacker. They attempt to lure characters into the squares adjacent to the columns, where they can attempt to gain cover and can subject the characters to the effect of the columns (see Features of the Area).

The specter makes its way across the room, skirting the battle between the characters and the PCs.



2 Minotaur Skeletons (M) Level 6 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 250 each
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 61 each; **Bloodied** 30
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 5
Greataxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d12 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the minotaur skeleton's next turn.
Sweeping Cut (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Requires greataxe; close burst 1; +11 vs. AC; 1d12 + 2 damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Minotaur Charge
When charging, the minotaur skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll instead of +1 and deals an extra 1d6 damage.
Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Str 15 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 3 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-1)
Equipment chainmail, greataxe

2 Blazing Skeletons (B) Level 5 Artillery
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 200 each
Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
Fiery Aura (**Fire**) aura 1; any creature starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.
HP 53 each; **Bloodied** 26
AC 19; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 fire, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6
Blazing Claw (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Flame Orb (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Alignment Evil **Languages** –
Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 4 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)

Specter (S)	Level 4 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 175
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
Spectral Chill (**Cold**) aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.	
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	
AC 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic** +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage.	
Spectral Barrage (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Illusion**, **Psychic** Close burst 2; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Invisibility (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion** The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 10 (+2)	**Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 13 (+3)	**Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+4)

The specter moves around and attacks any vulnerable characters who remain near the back. It tries to gain a position where it can make best use of its spectral barrage before unleashing the attack.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Darkness; the only illumination comes from what the PCs provide. A character has line of sight to a blazing skeleton even if it stands in darkness.

Columns of Bone: These stone columns are lined with sharp fragments of bone from minotaurs. At a distance, the bones seem merely decorative. However, a character moving into a square adjacent to one of the columns learns that the columns have a will of their own. The bones reach out, clawing at any character who walks by. Each time a living creature moves into a square adjacent to a column, it takes 4 damage. A character can disable the col-umns attack by attacking it and dealing enough damage to destroy the bones (AC 4, Fortitude 12, Reflex 4, hp 40).

Minotaur Embossment: The skull embossed on the floor is magical, and it courses with necrotic energy that gives life to certain undead. If a skeleton (either a minotaur skeleton or blazing skeleton) is standing on the em-bossment at the beginning of its turn, then it regains 3 hit points. A character that makes a DC 25 Arcana check can identify that the image is the source of the minotaurs' regenerative powers. However, nothing short of destroy-ing the tiles in a square (AC 4, Fortitude 12, Reflex 4, hp 80) disrupts the effect.

Piles of Bones: These squares are difficult terrain. The bones appear to be very old and have turned yellow with age. A DC 15 Nature check is enough to discern that most of the bones are minotaur, except for a few specimens that are dwarven and human.

Steps: These are normal terrain.

Thrones: These squares are difficult terrain. The thrones are made of stone and praises for Baphomet have been etched into them in Abyssal. Each throne contains the ceremonially wrapped remains of a minotaur. Although the creatures' forms have rotted so that only the skeletons remains, the hand of the body on the left still tightly clutches a multifaceted crystal; the crystal is nonmagical, but the item is the relic that the drow, Gendar, is seeking.

Treasure: The throne on the right has a hidden compartment in the seat that contains 200 gp and a book with the Enchant Magic Item and Arcane Lock rituals. ⚔

About the Author

Greg Bilsland is a game editor and contract writer at Wizards of the Coast. His writing credits include the *Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide* and several *D&D Insider™* articles. When he's not working, he spends much of his free time writing speculative fiction in one of Seattle's many coffee shops.

Information Management, Part 1

BY JAMES WYATT

True confessions time: I have a reputation around the office for being . . . um . . . well-organized. (That's "anal-retentive," please, two words, with a hyphen.) On the way to lunch one day, I reorganized the CDs in Rob Heinsoo's car—or at least, that's how he tells the story. And that story got me put in charge of the chaotic jumble that is the Wizards of the Coast RPG Games Library, so I might never forgive him for telling it.

Anyway, while I was writing last month's Dungeoncraft installment, I realized that I had created enough information that keeping track of it all was becoming an issue. So this time around, the topic at hand is how to keep that information organized—both for yourself and for your players. In essence, we're talking about two important concepts mentioned in the *Dungeon Master's Guide:* the DM's Notebook (see page 145) and the campaign handout (page 142). But I'm particularly interested in exploring other metaphors and media for organizing this information, especially those involving the Internet. That turns out to be a big enough topic to fill two Dungeoncraft episodes. So Part 1 covers how to present your campaign information to your players. Part 2 focuses on managing that information for yourself—and collaborating with your players.

The Campaign Handout

Your campaign handout is your players' introduction to your new campaign. Its primary purpose is to start them off in the game by helping them make their characters and understand the characters' place in the world. Its secondary purpose is, essentially, marketing. You want to create excitement about the upcoming game. It should have just enough hints about what's to come to whet their appetite for the first adventure. It should evoke a sense of wonder at the world and a sense of the danger that faces this world you've created. In short, it should make your players eager to start playing D&D.

What sort of information belongs in a campaign handout? Well, for my Greenbrier campaign, most of what I need to put in the handout is in the first installment of this series, from back in October. That's where I outlined the place of each race in the region around Greenbrier, and sketched my own map of the village and its surroundings. Fleshed out with details I've developed since then, and with the plans for future adventures stripped out, it makes a pretty good campaign introduction. Take a look above!

I find it interesting that in putting that handout together, I had to add a few details that I had overlooked: the name of the Burning Forest (still don't

know what it was called before), the Frosthorn Mountains, the Ravenwash River, and the eladrin city of Cendriane (which I lifted from the *Wizards Presents: Worlds and Monsters* preview book). The hardest part was the first column, the campaign background, which I had previously sketched out without much sense of a timeline or details.

I noted the most prominent NPCs I outlined last month—Eldest Birel, Kharavas and the other priests, and the two merchants—as well as the two characters I want to encourage my players to forge some ties to (Jander and the vanished knight of the Topaz Order). I didn't name the other NPCs, for two reasons. First, I don't want to tip my players off that some NPCs might become important in the campaign (Marti and Derek Veran, for example). Just as important, I don't want their heads to explode. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests an upper limit of two pages for a campaign handout like this, and I think that's a good rule of thumb. (A third page with just a map on it would be fine.) Don't make your players read a novel before you let them start playing in your campaign, and don't expect them to keep an encyclopedia of made-up facts in their minds. Just like read aloud text at the start of an encounter, simpler is better.

It would be pretty easy to set up a few web pages with exactly the same content to serve as a repository on the Internet for your basic campaign information. I even had visions of doing that first column introduction as a little Flash movie, with ominous music and scrolling text, *Star Wars* style. If you're playing an online game (play-by-post or using a virtual gaming table), that's a great idea—put the information in a format that helps your players access it. For a conventional tabletop game, though, don't neglect the value of an actual, physical handout. Players can keep it with their character sheets, put it in the front of their notebooks, or fold it into the pages of their *Player's Handbooks*. Most important, they can refer to it during play. If your players routinely have computers in front of them at the gaming table, an online version is fine. Otherwise, use paper—perhaps also an electronic version, but paper at minimum.

Don't make your players read a novel before you let them start playing in your campaign, and don't expect them to keep an encyclopedia of made-up facts in their minds.

✦ ✦ ✦

Simpler is better.

The Player Notebook

Here's a tip from editor Greg Bilsland: It's a great idea to keep a player notebook as well as the DM notebook we'll talk about next time. Make sure you have a copy of the campaign handout in there, and also put in maps, other handouts, a record of the group's treasure, the group's adventure log, and anything else the players might need to refer to during the game. It's great if one player has primary responsibility for maintaining and updating these notes, but you should hang onto it for those times when your note-keeping player can't make the game. You can still give the players individual copies of important handouts, but having one in a place where you and the players know where to find it can help keep your game running smoothly.

All the things we discuss next time about making the DM Notebook electronic also apply to this player notebook, *as long as it's accessible at the table.*

So that's it for Part 1. Next time, I'll report on my exploration of various web resources that might help me keep track of all this information.

About the Author

James Wyatt is the Lead Story Designer for D&D and one of the lead designers of D&D 4th Edition. In over seven years at Wizards of the Coast, he has authored or co-authored award-winning adventures and settings including the Eberron Campaign Setting, City of the Spider Queen, and Oriental Adventures. His more recent works include Expedition to Castle Ravenloft, Cormyr: The Tearing of the Weave, and The Forge of War. His third Eberron novel, Dragon Forge, was released in 2008.

Greenbrier Chasm

A thousand years ago something was bound deep in the earth. . .

A hundred years ago it escaped.

Its binding inaugurated an age of prosperity and the rise of the great empire of Nerath. Long before its release, darkness began to encroach on the shining empire. Founded in the empire's height, the village of Greenbrier now stands as a feeble beacon of light in the wilderness. If its people ever knew what others had buried in the earth near their homes, they long ago forgot.

Now, they know only the horror of its escape. Some of the village elders saw it emerge, but their minds could not contain any knowledge of its form or nature. They dream of it still, crying out in the night, but they cannot name it.

The land bears the scars of the atrocity that defiled it. Greenbrier Chasm lies like a gaping wound where the ancient evil tore its way free from its prison. The Burning Wood marks the creature's path away from the chasm before it disappeared into the space between worlds. The Depravation that once more has begun to emanate from the chasm—a corruption that warps all life, twisting it into a mockery of nature—reveals the lingering taint of the creature's presence.

Or perhaps it foretells the horror's return. . .

The Village of Greenbrier

Your characters grew up in or near the village of Greenbrier, a tiny crossroads village surrounded by a wooden palisade. A flickering candle amid the vast darkness of the wilderness, Greenbrier draws people from the surrounding area to its sheltering walls, offering what little promise of safety might come from numbers.

Here are the key features of the village, and the people connected to them.

Common House: Both a tavern and a place for the villagers to gather for meetings.

- Eldest Birel Stormwatcher (female elf), the village's oldest resident, who leads town meetings.

The Temple: Bahamut's altar holds the central place here, but Pelor, Moradin, and Kord also have altars and priests inside.

- Kharavas Silverscale (male dragonborn), the aging priest of Bahamut.
- Cabra Sunblessed (female human), the young, idealistic priest of Pelor.
- Orin (male human), the village blacksmith and priest of Moradin.
- Gredda (female half-elf), a retired soldier, a merchant, and a priest of Kord.

Moonsword Trading House: A merchant consortium based in nearby Silverymoon.

- Thadrik Boarshelm (male dwarf), the local Moonsword agent, an excellent source for exotic goods.

Brindinford Shipping: Another merchant house, based in Lake Town. Gredda (the priest of Pelor) is the local agent.

The Surrounding Area

The palisades of the village are surrounded by farms, and beyond the farms stand the scorched trees of the Burning Wood. A generation ago, the forest was a lush wilderness inhabited by elves and shifters, and the eladrin of Cendriane moved freely back and forth between the Feywild and the world. Now the forest is a desolate waste of blackened trunks and scorched earth, where strange green fire still dances along the ground in random eruptions.

North of Greenbrier is the city of Silverymoon, the last great bastion of civilization in the middle of the wilderness. A road leads to the city, still well-traveled by merchants of the Moonsword Trading House, but it is not as safe as it used to be.

South along the road lies the town of Tower Watch, built amid the ruins of a larger city. The most notable feature of the ruins is an ancient tower that still stands, with no windows or known entrances.

The third branch of the road leads southeast along the Ravenwash River to Lake Town, a small town built on wooden platforms extending over a great lake.

The road to the west is ancient, worn, and choked with grass and weeds. It leads to the Frosthorn Peaks and to old Harrows Pass, but the pass hasn't been used in decades.

CAMPAIGN RULES

The Dungeoncraft campaign uses all the core D&D rules, with a few modifications and exceptions.

Character Races

For the start of the campaign, you can use any *Player's Handbook* race except for tiefling, or you can play a shifter using the rules in the *Monster Manual*.

The people of Greenbrier are mostly human farmers. Many of them live on farms outside the village palisades.

Dragonborn are heirs of an empire far older than Nerath, and they cling to an ancient pride. They have no established communities, but they often provide protective services to dwarf caravans traveling between Greenbrier and the nearby settlements. A couple of dragonborn are settled in the village, but more live in Silverymoon.

Elves used to live in what is now called the Burning Forest, but since its devastation they have moved into the smaller, tame forests closer to Greenbrier, and their camps and roving bands are as much a part of the village as the scattered farmsteads. Elves have been a part of Greenbrier long enough that a notable number of half-elves now inhabit the village.

Eladrin used to inhabit a Feywild city called Cendriane, which stood at a thin place between the worlds in the middle of the forest. With the destruction of the Burning Forest, the eladrin city was destroyed as well, sending refugees scattering into the Feywild and Greenbrier alike.

Some dwarf merchants and artisans are settled in the village, and others come through in caravans from time to time. Dwarf caravans link Greenbrier to the nearby city and towns.

A group of halflings, like the elves, has moved in close to Greenbrier in response to danger encroaching on their former home farther up the Ravenwash River, in the foothills of the Frosthorns. They live on a raft of small boats lashed together, ready to pick up and float away if danger draws too near.

Shifters used to wander the plains where Greenbrier now stands, and in the early days of the village conflict was common between the shifters and the humans with their expanding farms. Now those conflicts are mostly forgotten, and shifters live among the human farmers in the village or alongside the elves in the nearby woods.

Magic Items

You can't routinely buy or sell magic items in this campaign. You can use the Enchant Magic Item and Disenchant Magic Item rituals to create the items you want and convert unwanted items to residuum.

CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

As you think about your character background, please consider connections between your character and the other player characters, and try to forge a strong bond with at least one other character.

Besides other player characters, you might also have ties to NPCs in the village. In addition to the characters mentioned on the previous page, you might consider a tie to one of these two characters and their stories:

- Jander, a crazy old man, was Cabra's predecessor as Pelor's priest in the temple. He's devout and earnest—too earnest, in fact, for the people of the village. He used to harangue well-meaning farmers, telling them they weren't doing enough to stave off the encroaching darkness, and sometimes publicly berating those who had failed to show mercy and kindness to their neighbors. Finally the people of the village replaced him with Cabra. He lives in a hut just inside the village palisade and rarely ventures outside.
- Several years ago, a valiant knight ventured into the deepest reaches of Greenbrier Chasm. The family of this knight treasures a single heirloom left behind: a golden holy symbol of Bahamut with a topaz eye. You might be a member of this family—perhaps the child or other relative of the vanished knight.

Saying Yes is a Skill
(and Saying Yes With Skills)

BY STEPHEN RADNEY-MACFARLAND

Back in my days as content manager for the RPGA, I used to get a lot of emails. A lot may be an understatement. It was not unusual for 50 to 100 pieces of electronic correspondence to pour into my overworked inbox in a day, and that's not counting the ones from folks hawking those little blue pills or pleads from Nigerian businessmen desperately needing to unload their cash. These were honest to gosh emails from gamers. Gamers with question. Gamers with problems. A good chunk of those emails came in two main forms: DMs complaining that players were doing or wanted to do something "broken" in one Dungeons & Dragons game or the other; and players asking permission to do "cool" things with their characters, or to tell their DM the cool thing they were doing was not broken.

As you can probably guess, I often received emails from two people on opposite sides of the screen in the same playgroup. Both were cries for help, and the solutions often proved to be deceptively tricky.

While D&D is not a competitive game, it can sometimes seem to have competing goals. When you're the DM, it's imperative that you challenge and sometimes even thwart the PCs. When you're the player, it's your job to soundly thump those challenges wily DM's put between you and the glory and gold your character so richly deserves. While this stress creates the fun and tension of a good roleplaying session, it's easy to lose track of the big picture. The game is really about building heroic experiences among friends. On one end you need heroes that stand out of the throng and who are capable of being larger than life and achieving great feats of daring. On the other end, it's the DM's job to make that task possible, but fantastically difficult. When a player can't do his job, or do it as well as he would like, he starts scouring the rules or looking for ways to make his character cooler. Meanwhile, the DM is left lamenting "broken" rules and having a hard time making the game as challenging as it should be.

A good dose of this is quite normal. You'll have times in your game where a player become excited to the point of anxious to get that next level, start the planned paragon path, or to find that magic items the legends say that is hidden somewhere in the Citadel of Kas. And there are times that even the best DM's plans to challenge are thwarted by a player toy that was forgotten or underestimated. But when a player's frustration mounts because his character can't do cool things, or your DM becomes frustrated every session that her monsters and traps "don't work," these are problems. Something is broken. And in times like these, it is often the first response to limit choice, take away toys, and clamp down on variables. But there is another way. Learn to say, "Yes!"

Let "Yes" be Your Mantra

I don't want to sound too much like some New Age self-help guru, but I think that most games run into problems when the sense of wonder and surprise is leeched from the game. And usually the leech occurs when DMs try to limit rather than expand their toolbox. How can you stop this from happening? You really have to just tap into some childlike wonder.

When I first discovered D&D, I can remember daydreaming for most of an afternoon with copies of the *Monster Manual* and *Fiend Folio* on my lap, and just being surprised and delighted with the strange variety of creatures that were there. Yes, some were downright strange and others were ideas that I thought were dumb . . . but I took it as a challenge to place them in my game and have them make sense. I never dismissed something out of hand, because frankly those books were some of my best tools. Sure, I might gravitate toward some favorites that I used again and again, but I had entire books of ideas to mix things up.

Consider this case in point. The cifal, also known as the Colonial Insect-Formed Artificial Life (I'm not joking), was a critter from the original *Fiend Folio* that featured a back story and a name I thought was absolutely stupid. And I was not alone; in 2000 the cifal was voted the stupidest *Fiend Folio* monster by the readers of *Polyhedron* magazine. Still, this critter showed up a number of times in my game as a

swarm-of-flies devil that served Baalzebul. What did I change about the monster? Not much, just the name and alignment. It was that easy. My players were scared to death of the poor, stupid cifal, which they knew as bzazels (heck, not even a vast of an improvement on the name front, come to think of it).

The same is true if you look at monsters the other way around. Maybe you have a monster that thematically works for you, but on the first encounter your PCs trash it with ease. Now consider this problem: You have a whole adventure to go and your plans included these guys popping up more often than not. The solution? Do a quick assessment on where the monster's deficit lies, and fix it on the fly. You can make some kind of subtle but noticeable difference to the next encountering of the monsters (a simple "these guys seem faster," "they shimmer with eldritch energy," or "they are wearing better armor" will do), and let the PCs have it. While players feel a sense of accomplishment for beating down a group of baddies fast, that accomplishment wanes quickly with repletion. Players want to be challenged. Oblige them by any means necessary. Give monsters more hit points, better defenses (usually a level raise does the trick), or maybe an interesting power that shoves them in the right direction.

Keep this sense of wonder and flexibility in mind when deciding what you'll allow as PC choices as well. I know there's been a some virtual rumblings about dragonborn and some of the newer D&D races from folks who (like myself) were weaned on Tolkien. But you have to realize that fantasy is a language, and that languages expand and change—especially when the language is discovered and loved by younger users. When I was a kid, all I wanted to write, draw, and paint was the fantasy of Moorcock, Leiber, Howard, and Tolkien . . . and of course D&D. The adults around me told me I was wasting my time. Often, cruelly and with much certainty, they said the flights of fantasy I loved were dumb, or pedestrian, or childish. They were wrong.

Now the tables are turned, and I'm the adult. It wasn't so long ago that I sat in a meeting at my other gig—as an instructor at a local art school—and I sat around and listened to other instructors complain about how the kids liked drawing all this over-the-top anime fantasy. They called it childish, pedestrian, and a waste of time. Guess what: They're wrong, too. What those kids are drawing is the future of fantasy and it's coming fast. If I were you, I'd do my best to understand it and embrace it, and go out of your way to find a fit for it in your game world. Join the conversation instead of denying it! One of the greatest strengths of D&D and roleplaying games as a medium is the shared aspect of it. Sharing is compromise. Sharing is being flexible. Sharing is saying yes. Sharing is fun!

Keeping your mind open to new wonders isn't all about picking monsters and allowing players to have options, though. The philosophy of saying yes is at its most powerful during actual play. In a world where wizards can cast fireball and stop time, and rogues can scale sheer cliffs and steal a gem the size of a dragonborn's egg right under the steely gaze of undead guardians, there is very little a DM should say "no" to. Sure, the blatantly impossible might be out (most the time), and you DMs are going to have to use your best judgment when it comes to the improbable, but everything else should be in the realm of, "sure, and here's what you have to do." One of your best tools for this is the skill system in D&D.

Skills, Challenges, and Yes

If you haven't noticed yet, the skill system in 4th Edition is broad and flexible. That's on purpose. It really isn't there to strictly limit what characters and critters can do, but to give us guidelines for use under a very simple and reliable game mechanic—the skill check.

Here's just a simple, small example of what I mean. In my game, one of the first things the PCs typically do is try to find out what they can about new enemies with the use of Knowledge checks. They do this to metagame a little (which I admit I encourage . . . I like to reward play skill as well as role skill) plus they know if they roll high enough, I give bonus information. In one game, a size Large lizardlike creature approached, and characters trained in knowledge Nature blew their check to identify it. The player playing the rogue asked he could use Streetwise to recognize it. I said yes, made a significant increase to the DC of the check, and let the rogue roll. One high roll later, here's what I told him: "You recognize the strange lizard from the painted sign of a tavern you often frequent. It's a basilisk. The next time you're in town, you should commend the artist on the sign's realistic depiction of the beast." The player's response: "Cool."

Now technically, by a strict reading of the skill system, this wouldn't be allowed, but what's the harm in saying yes? You want to create a more complicated matrix where a succession of checks leads toward a more complicated goal? That's exactly what skill challenges are there to help you design. When you do this, there is a natural worry that you are not being as "correct" as you could be. Let that worry melt away and remember what you are designing for. Most of you are not writing a published adventure for *Dungeon Magazine*. You're not writing a supplement. Abstract game concepts like balance and percentile precision play second fiddle to creating a memorable and fun game experience at the table. That's what those abstract concepts are for anyway. They attempt to create a system that is fun, rather than an "infinite" number of play instances. In your games, you have a level of intimate knowledge that gamers and developers wish they could have over that theoretical infinite number

of play instances. Don't be afraid to prioritize that very special knowledge above the letter of the rules.

In short, let your players occasionally "outsmart" the skill system when the inspiration (or desperation) arises. Give them a chance for success and failure, put those DCs where you think they belong, and even if the end result is failure, your players will feel like he can try anything that seems reasonable (or even possible) in the game rather than relying on the game to tell him what is reasonable (or possible). It is that level of flexibility that makes a roleplaying game shine over games subject to the binary tyranny of computer programs. Be nimble, be ready, be fun. Sure, sometimes goofy things will occur, and over time you will learn how best to say yes in your game. But take that chance; only fun can ensue. If may feel uncomfortable at first, but with any skill practice makes perfect.

THE MAIL BAG

It's that time again . . .
Let's see what's in the mailbag.

Better Late than Never?

I love playing D&D, and look forward to every Saturday, when my group gets together. My problem is that we are supposed to start at 3:00, but we usually don't start until at least 5:00, and usually not until 6:00. My players are just always late . . . well, at least one of them is, but even when he is not late someone else is. What can I do to get my players around the table on time?

Wade-ing Around Wade

In these situations, the first solution is always to talk to your players. More often than not, things like this really bother folks, and more than one in a group, but no one brings it out in the open because they are afraid of creating a fuss. That's a mistake. Be calm. Be reasonable. Show some understanding, but explain to everyone (not just the person who tends to be late), that you would like to get as much game time as possible so you want to start the game on time. Be open to changing the schedule. Maybe starting at 3:00 is too early, or it's flush up against some other activity contributing to that player's tardiness. Pushing the game start time to 5:00 may just be the realistic solution you're looking for.

Once you've had that talk, here's another, more proactive trick to get people around the game table on time. Keep playable copies of each character's sheet and have each player designate a second, and maybe a third. Start the game on time, and if a player doesn't show or is running a little late, have the second run the character until the player does. This accomplishes a few things. First it makes sure that if a player is missing, his or her character doesn't just drop off the face of your game world. Better still, it ensures that you aren't saddled making decisions for the character (you have enough going on). Lastly, few players are comfortable with the idea of someone else playing their character, even their best friend. Sure they might say they don't mind it, but they are more likely to show up on time when the consequence for not showing up is their character's decisions are being made by someone else.

Opposites Attract

After reading your article, "Marking Marked and Other 4e-isms", I got some of those Alea Tools magnet markers, but they are driving me crazy. The magnets in the tokens are so strong that adjacent combatants keep on attracting and repelling at inopportune times. I like the way they mark things, but man this is annoying. I wish you would have pointed this out in the article.

Paraphrased Pete

So I call this reader Paraphrased Pete, but this is a question (or rather a complaint) I received on our message boards about the article in question. I've paraphrased it to fit the tone and size of the article.

Yeah, I've encountered this too, but while it has created the occasional comical effect, it really doesn't bother me the way it's bugged you. Still, I see your point, and I should have pointed out this issue in the original article. There are solutions though. One particularly message board participant pointed out that you can place a steel sheet under your play surface, to give a focus to the magnet's pull. You can find them at your local hardware store, but bring some magnets with you. I hear that sometimes aluminum sheets get mixed in with the steel, and the former metal will not have the same effect. Feel a little daunted by the prospect of lugging around steel sheets to the game story or the local convention? Well, you're in luck. A company called Dark-Platypus Studios (**www.dark-platypus.com**) makes a portable and flexible magnetic receptive 1-inch gridded play map. I don't have one myself, but I have heard some really good things about them.

CLOG OUR MAILBOX!

Your game needs saving, or you have some game saving advice of your own? Drop us a line at dndinsider@wizards.com with the worlds "Save My Game" as your subject line. Maybe next month we'll talk about your problem or feature some bit of advice that comes from the mailbag.

You can also join the game saving conversation on our message boards, but piping in on the discussion of DM tips and tricks. Stephen makes it a point to visit and chat with those who agree and disagree with him.

VALE OF FALLEN WYRMS
1. The Duskharrow Road
2. Shrine of Tiamat
3. Spirit Well
4. The Bone Pit
5. The Sunken Green
6. Dragon Graveyard
7. The Blue Tyrant's Pyre
8. Tainted River
9. Duskharrow Gate
10. The Ruins of Deathwatch Hold
11. Ledge up to the Sepulchral Cavern
1 square = 15 feet
WEST